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COMICS scene

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Brandon Peterson's heroic image

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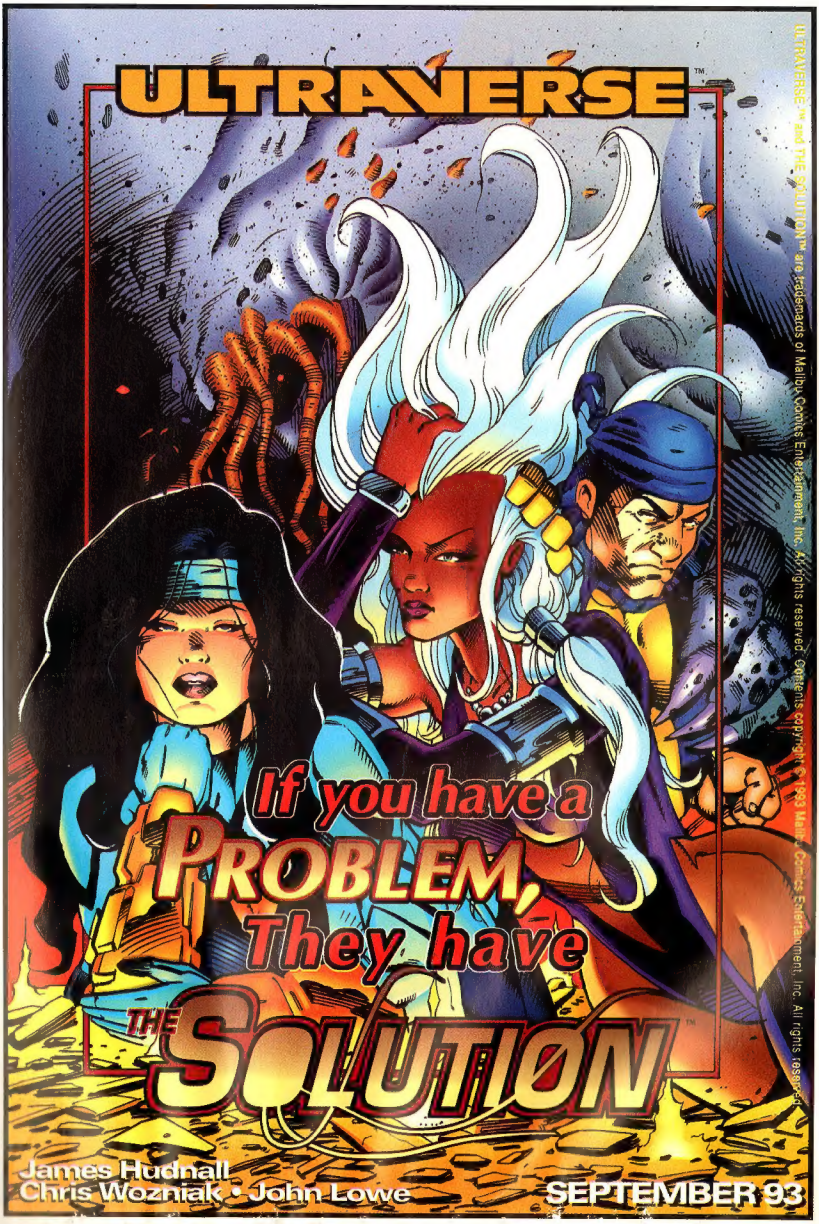
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COMICS scene

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WORD BALLOONS

Xerographic Delights

Heroes, heroes, heroes everywhere. This issue, we continue an exhaustive tradition, previewing *Exiles*, *Xenotech*, *Exosquad*, *X-Men 2099* and the unsymmetrically named *Stryke Force*.

Certainly, anyone can find heroes in daily life. Just looking around my office, I did. Let me introduce the X-Perts—just one of several names we're known by till the trademark paperwork shows up—complete with alter-egos.

Hyper-Kinetic Lass (Maureen McTigue). Able to bounce off the walls, laughing, at the slightest provocation. Especially after imbibing any amount of caffeine or sucrose. Costume fashioned by former Power Girl wardrobe designer. Can write faster than anyone except The Man With Two First Names. Leader of the Xenoperts.

X-Acto Man (Jim McLernon). X-Acto blades are buried deep within his powerful X-Acto skeleton, enabling quick design of mechanicals, logos and torn photo effects. Not so good at spelling. Thinks team is called X-Actoperts. Once involved in a tragic romance with Tadpole Girl. Used to have own comic book until somebody borrowed it.

Workaholic (Dave McDonnell). Works, works, works. Edits, edits, edits. Gets annoyed, annoyed, annoyed. Once involved in a tragic romance with Tadpole Girl. Has no life but is saving up to buy one, get one free.

Man-Mountain Madman (Mike McAvennie). Former Managing Editor. Once involved in a tragic romance with Tadpole Girl. The Exoperts' brute force. Quit to pursue own mantra and mission in life—to Fedex everything he ever photocopied. Now living in quiet seclusion in the Himalayas, playing the Ancient One's video game collection. Mostly Pong.

The Shambler from the Stars (Scott Briggs). Summoned by a power greater than his own to replace Man-Mountain. Has temporarily taken human form. Not Irish, however. Once involved in a tragic romance with Tadpole Girl. Knew H.P. Lovecraft personally.

Bloody Pulp (Will Murray). Ghost writer for numerous heroes. Once involved in a tragic romance with Tadpole Girl. Also knew H.P. Lovecraft personally. Has *absolute knowledge* that your comics are worthless.

Prima Designa (Calvin Lee). No relation to Stan, Jim, Jae. Once involved in a tragic romance with Tadpole Girl. Designer extraordinaire. Often works in tandem with X-Acto Man. Can't spell either.

Master Cynic (David Hutchison). Official photographer of the ExPerps. Always looks on the dark side of doom. Introduced Tadpole Girl to everyone.

Mr. Prolific (Kim Howard Johnson). Never met a comic book creator he hasn't interviewed or won't be shortly. Writes almost as quickly as Hyper-Kinetic Lass, sometimes using bigger words. Never met Tadpole Girl.

And of course, where there are heroes, there must be villains. Like:

Wytche Hazel. Possesses the mysterious power to cloud people's minds so that they can not see her via aerosol hair spray. Icon: The mystical bobby pin. Worked as Bette Midler's stand-in on *Hocus Pocus*.

Monsieur Magickal. The human guide to pseudo-values. Anything—from Ming china to the *Tarzan and the Tarzan Twins with Jad-Bal-Ja the Golden Lion Big, Big Book*—is worth exactly what he says it's worth. Always loses when he plays the home version of *The Price is Right*, though.

Scream Queen. A personal assistant who turned a talent for getting coffee and abject sycophancy into a career in crime. Beloved by tens. Yes, tens.

Greyfriars Lobby. Ex-member of the X-O Perts, he defected to become a Washington lobbyist. Tries to seduce other heroes, heroines and small dogs into eventual membership in the Lobby of Misunderstood Mutants. Once involved in a tragic romance with Tadpole Girl. Can discern the contents of any memo by the color of the paper on which it's printed.

The Anti-Publicist. Deals adequately with the only two types of media outlets she reads—newsweekly magazines and supermarket checkout tabloids. If the Anti-Publicist and a *real* publicist were ever to touch, life as we know it would blow up. And there would be no press release about it.

Needless to say, look for the XXXperts posters, T-shirts, trading cards, ceramic statues, silk underwear, animated series and pogs. We're not sure yet when the first issue of our polybagged Exacting X-Pertos limited series will ship other than, as is traditional, late.

—David McDonnell/Editor

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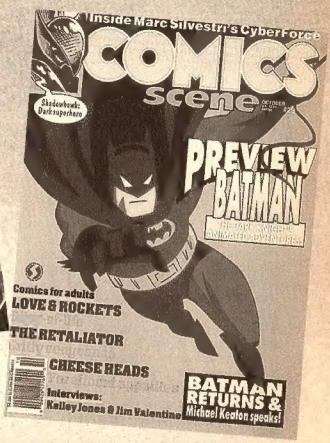

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...This is to say that a faithful reader has returned to the ranks, after a long defection to an upstart copycat with a pretty cover. While I was browsing through a bookstand after being disgusted, because some friends and I were looking for a comic book store that wasn't even open, we came across issue #36 of COMICS SCENE. I have to say that it made me regret the day I ever started reading the other magazine. I have nothing but praise for it, because it really opened my eyes to what's out there (as if you never did) and helped me make up my mind with some insightful stuff.

What first caught my attention was seeing Icon and Rocket on the cover, because I am now collecting all four titles of the Dakota Universe. I came into that Universe late, and I have to dig into the dirt to look for back issues. The story behind some of them wasn't clear, especially the real deal on Blood Syndicate. But after reading your article, it cleared up many things. I hope you keep a close eye on this universe, so I can read more about it in the future.

Now that I have left the MegaGiant Marvel to spend my money on other books like Milestone, I didn't know where else to go. That was until I saw some of those books in the store, but I didn't pay them any attention. After reading your article, Dark Horse is about to get a brand new customer.

It is nice to hear about other companies out there that aren't Valiant, Image, Marvel or DC, companies that your competitors love to give so much press to. When I got my first Milestone book, *Static*, it was polybagged with a trading card. I ripped it open just to read the book, and to the serious collector this would seem a foolish folly. I felt that way a little, but after reading David McDonnell's editorial, I won't hesitate to do so in the future. Keep up the good work, guys, and I'll never leave again.

Gary L. Davis
105 Rackley Drive
Greenville, NC 27834

Glad to have you back. As we are fond of emphasizing, comics are meant to be read and enjoyed, not purchased like stock market investments. Cut open all those polybags and read *the comics.*

...I am a big fan of *Gregory* comics, and, as it was put in #35, one of the "Unusual Statistics" of female comics readers. I loved *Gregory I, II* and *III*, but thanks to a simple line in CS #35, I am no longer a fan of *Gregory* comics.

Mark Hempel insulted me, and many other female comic readers, by saying of his female comic fans, "maybe it's the girl friends of comic buffs," hence implying that there are certain things one sex and one sex alone can do.

There are many more female comics readers out there than Hempel evidently acknowledges. This is supposed to be a liberated time for women—but Hempel's remark shows that things haven't changed for some people at all—like the creator of the *Gregory* comics whom I used to idolize.

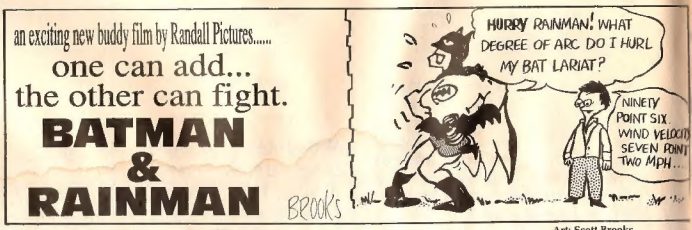
You say you find it heartening to have female fans of your comic, Marc Hempel? Well, you just lost one.

Gabrielle Moliero
Trumbull, CT

...Poor Phil DeGuere. He was handed a comic-book character and had to make the most of a limited budget. He spent his interview in CS#36 blaming the failure of his project on technical drawbacks and how there wasn't enough money to create impressive magic for the *Dr. Strange* pilot.

There are always changes made from mag to media, and for any number of reasons a costume is altered or a detail in the origin slightly modified. These changes can be very disappointing to a purist, but are often understandable. So why am I writing this letter in offense of DeGuere's defense? Let's take a look at other, more successful superhero adaptations:

Superman with Christopher Reeve is perhaps as faithful an adaptation a comic is ever likely to have. His costume was perfect, which means he was readily identifiable; this *was* Superman. But more than that, it was faithful to the comic book. Obviously a story which endured many decades and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HURRY RAINMAN! WHAT DEGREE OF ARC DO I HURL MY BAT LARIAT?
NINETY POINT SIX. WIND VELOCITY SEVEN POINT TWO MPH...
BROOKS

Art: Scott Brooks

touched many people had to have an essence which—no matter what elements had to be changed in order to adapt Superman to the big screen—had to be upheld. Of course, we're talking about his fight for truth, justice and the American Way.

In Tim Burton's *Batman*, the costume was modified to serve as a more defensive piece of equipment. But in doing so, the character's look remained unmistakable. And yes, the budget enabled them to build enough sets and gizmos to thrill us during those couple of hours. But more than anything, Burton never lost sight of the key to *Batman*'s longtime success: Wayne's obsession with avenging his parents' deaths while protecting Gotham City from a host of exceptional villains. If these were taken away, the film wouldn't have gone as far as it had.

The Incredible Hulk hits a little closer to home. A Universal TV series. No doubt a restricted budget. The name of the principal character altered. Special effects limited to a muscleman painted green and a large supply of balsa wood. Not even amusing banter like "Hulk smash!" Why do you suppose something like this could have succeeded? Maybe because the story of the Hulk was *not* limited to superficial things such as how far he could jump or whether or not the creature could speak. The point of *The Incredible Hulk* is this poor man's potential for destruction beyond his control, and the terror that his secret would be discovered. It kept people watching for years.

Now we come to DeGuere and his pilot. Why do you suppose it failed? For a start, the visual identification was nonexistent. Note that even the stills you published of Peter Hooten in costume were a result of a spell cast by Morgan Le Fay and had nothing to do with what Strange actually ended up with (a white leisure suit—who would *want* to print it?). Clea—a dimensional alien and Strange's love interest in the comics—was reduced to a college student who simply started dating her shrink. There is even a suggestion that the Ancient One—this dapper, eccentric gentleman who resides in Greenwich Village—may in fact be Merlin. This isn't *Doctor Strange*, it's *Camelot*!

The makers of this turkey missed the whole point of *Dr. Strange*, and why it has endured in comicdom despite the character's non-superheroic pacifism. The point isn't magic and special FX (though they do indeed attract quite a bit of attention). The point is that a man could fall so low, then pick himself up, regain his self-respect, and become entrusted to protect the universe. The human will—take that away and your character is *no longer* Dr. Strange. Take out that human aspect and you've forever lost that certain hook with which to lure viewers.

So you see, budget or no, the series was doomed from the start. Comics fans collect that home video because it is called *Dr. Strange*, and because it's so bad it's funny. It doesn't go beyond that. But wouldn't it have been more fulfilling (and profitable) to have created something a bit more accurate? I know I speak for many fans when I say that I hope Wes Craven learns from Phil DeGuere's mistakes, and pays more attention to the comic book and its more memorable moments.

Debbie David
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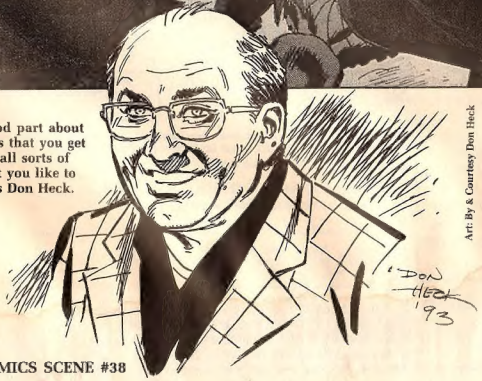
Almost 44 years later, Don Heck continues drawing comics.

Part Two

Selected Marvel Heck Art Courtesy Will Murray

All Art: Don Heck Design & Layout: Calvin Lee



Art: By & Courtesy Don Heck

"The good part about comics is that you get to draw all sorts of stuff that you like to do," says Don Heck.

Don Heck's *Avengers* debut was issue #9, featuring the well-received Wonder Man, whom he designed. He went on to introduce numerous memorable characters, like the Swordsman and Goliath—Heck's revamping of Giant-Man.

Initially, taking over *The Avengers* was a comfortable assignment for Heck, since it featured Iron Man, Giant-Man and Thor, all characters he had previously drawn in their own

IT CAN'T BE HERCULES! HE IS ONLY...A MYTH!
EVEN MY SORCERESS SHALL CAN SCARCE CALCULATE ONLY THE MEREST FRACTION!
BUT, SURELY HE CANNOT STAND AGAINST THE MIGHTIEST OLYMPIANS OF ALL!
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD, PIETRO? YOU MUST!
LOOK AT THE FACES OF THESE POOR PEOPLE...FILLED WITH FEAR AND DESPAIR! YEAH! AND IF WE DON'T STOP 'EM IT WILL BE!
BURN...GHOST...WE ARE WARRIORS OF THE NEW WORLD! IN US CAN BE NO WEAKNESS, NO CONSCIENCE! THIS IS WAR...FOR THIS GLORY OF COMMUNISM!
MEN, YOU'RE ABOUT TO MEET THE ENEMY...AND DON'T SELL HIM SHORT! THESE REDS ARE WELL TRAINED, WELL EQUIPPED, SHEDDING AND TOUGH!
THIS AMERICANS ARE WEAKLINGS! WHILE THEY PLAYED GAMES...WE MADE OURSELVES STRONG FOR WAR!
TASTE THOU THE HAMMERING OF HERCULES—AND THEN SAY HE IS NAUGHT BUT THE STUFF OF LEGEND!
BY MY BEARD! THE STRIPLING WITH THE SPEED OF HERMES! AGAIN, HE HATH ELUDED ME!
NO, MY SISTER! OUR FOEMAN KNOWS I WISH TO FIGHT ALONE!
SO! FAIR! THEN IT WILL BE GOOD AS YOU TURN!
SUDDENLY, BEFORE THE AMAZED SHE-PEOPLE!
THE FLEET-FOOTED HERMES HAS PAUSED BUT A SECOND YET...TIME ENOUGH FOR HERCULES!
INSOLENT ROSE, YOU LEST THOU SEES TO TO TURN TAIL! VERY DEMON-SPAWN INTO A QUAKE!
WITH ONE SWEEP OF MINE ARM, I SHALL END THIS FARCE!
NOW—SNUFF OUT HIS LIFE AS IF THERE BE A CANDLE!
NO, NO!
HOLD IT, NAIDA! HE'S STILL CONSCIOUS! HE'S GETTING UP!
SLOWLY, PAINFULLY, HERCULES STRUGGLES TO HIS FEET!
FOR NOW—THE SHALL BLOW!
HE'S RIGHT OVER ME! MUST MAKE MY MOVE —NOW!
CAN SUCH WONDERS BE? HE IS GONE—IN THE MEREST TWINKLING OF AN EYE!
WOOSH
YES—BUT, SO THE GREAT TEST HAS BEEN MADE! SQUARELY, THE FINAL HOUR! SILVER WOLF NEVER HAVE BEEN ABLE!

Art: Don Heck/George Bell

Battle Art: Copyright 1960 Male Publishing Corp.

WONDER MAN

By WILL MURRAY

"I always liked regular stories," Heck relates. "I like somebody if you shoot them and they bleed."

■

Heck advises up-and-coming artists to know more than just their craft.

strips, as well as Captain America.

But with *Avengers* #16, Heck again took a back seat to Jack Kirby, who came in and revamped the line-up, booting out everyone except Captain America and bringing in a number of lesser-light characters including Quicksilver, the Scarlet Witch and an Iron Man supporting cast member Heck knew very well—Hawkeye.

"I was the one who started Hawkeye," Heck says. "He was just a villain in one of the Iron Man stories. Stan saw that he was doing very well, and he probably thought of him—the way that I did—as a Robin Hood type of character."

To this day, Heck doesn't know exactly what motivated Lee to drop some of his most popular characters from the team, only to replace them with what might be charitably described as second stringers, but the artist suspects it was concern over continuity problems between the original Avengers cast and their main strips.

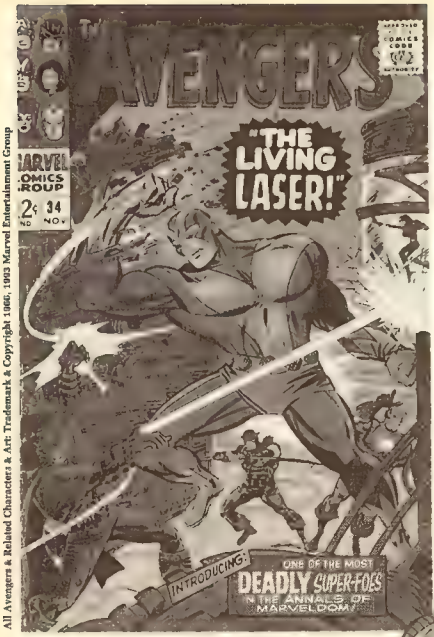
Art: Don Heck/Romeo Tanghal

"They were always so worried that there had to be sequential things," Heck recalls. "Thor was doing something in his book, so you couldn't have him doing something different in Iron Man's book—which I thought was ridiculous. But that was the way it was thought of at the time.

"The good part about *The Avengers*," he adds, "was that I had seven or eight issues Kirby had done that I could look through. There was something down there. It's like inking somebody. I'm not that fast, but if there was something down there—even if it was crap—I could change the crap and fix it, and make it work, and do it faster in many cases than I could myself from scratch."

Despite being teamed with powerhouse inkers like Wally Wood and Dick Ayers, the distinctive Don Heck style shone through—particularly in his unique approach to character design. "Style is like handwriting," Heck notes. "Even if you wanted to, you *couldn't* change it. If John Romita draws just one head in a whole story, you know John Romita did it. In fact, John inked one of my *Avengers* stories, and he said, 'I'm sorry, Don. It looks like one of mine,' because he's such a powerful inker. I said, 'John, I've got no complaints, as long as the final product is good.' "

"It was strange to me, all those different characters. There was nothing great happening," the artist says of the *Justice League of America*.



All Avengers & Related Characters & Art: Trademark & Copyright 1965, 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group

"Style is like handwriting," Heck notes.

AND INCREDIBLY, BEFORE THE LAST OF THE EJECTED SHELLS CAN FALL FROM THE GUNS TO THE FLOOR
RAT-TAT-TAT
NOW TO BETTER DEAL WITH THIS TRIGGER HAPPY PAIR OF WOULD-BE HOMICIDES BEFORE
LEADER
TAT-TAT-TAT
IT HURTS ME NO END TO THINK THAT DR. ALCHEMY IS UP TO HIS OLD TRICKS AGAIN.
WH-WH-WHERE'S ALCHEMY WHEN WE NEEDED HIM?

Selected DC Heck Art courtesy Tom Tollin

Flash Art: Don Heck/Frank Chiaramonte

Heck was hampered by the Flash. "I wanted the Flash done where you didn't see these little individual figures doing things. He's supposed to be a blur."

In 1967, Heck left *The Avengers* for *The X-Men*, simultaneously pitching in on *Spider-Man*, often inking Romita's pencils.

"I did the in-between stuff in many cases," Heck explains, "like *Spider-Man Annual* #3. John Romita would rough it out, and then he would send it over to Mike Esposito, who was working as 'Mickey Demeo' at the time. Romita would send the pencils out to me—on tracing paper, probably—and I would work on it from that point. At one point, I was doing breakdowns on *The X-Men*, and Werner Roth was tight-pencilling it. Vince Colletta inked it."

Heck thought his *Wonder Woman* work was a great assignment—*until* he discovered that the book wasn't a good seller.

Most *Spider-Man* artists complain that the character's webbing gave them trouble. Heck is no exception. "They did until John told me what they were," Heck admits. "The lines had to go a certain way around the face. Once you knew what the pattern was, it was easy."

Heck didn't stay with either strip long, gravitating to *Sub-Mariner* during the period in which Namor was given a costume, and working on *Captain Savage and His Battlefield Raiders*, among other books. He also revisited *Iron Man*, by then in his own title.

By the early 1970s, Heck had knocked around Marvel for some 15 years, sometimes pencilling, sometimes inking, but seldom both pencilling and inking his own work. It was frustrating. "I did some *Daredevil*," he recalls. "It wasn't inked very well, and I was getting the bad rap for all of these wonderful inkers. I loved that. I always get this comment, 'The first story I ever did when I got in the business, I inked your stuff.' My comment used to be—not to them—if a cleaning lady walked down the hall with a brush stuck behind her ear, she would've had a Don Heck job by the time she reached the end of the hall. She would have said, 'Don't worry. I can ink it.' "

Clearly, it was time for a change. Then came the final straw. "Roy Thomas called me into the office and said that he was going to have somebody else ink something I was doing," relates Heck. "It may have been *Daredevil*. It was New Year's Eve, and I was getting this really thrilling news: Another 'star' is going to screw with stuff I had been working on, so I figured maybe I would have a better chance over at DC."

Heck was, and still is, sanguine about the move. "You take a shot," he says. "If it doesn't work, you go back to the other one. It's the only way you can work it sometimes."

The move to DC brought Heck what at first seemed to be a plum assignment—*Wonder Woman*. "I did almost 30 issues," he says. "I had a very good inker with me for a while, Rick Magyar. He did a great job. I just wanted to pencil and ink my own stuff so I didn't have to tight-pencil it, and could spend more

All Flash, Wonder Woman, Justice League & Related Characters & Art: Trademark & Copyright 1980, 1982, 1983, 1993 DC Comics Inc.

time finishing it. That's when I started to make some money for a change."

But disillusionment set in when he discovered that instead of being one of DC's top titles, *Wonder Woman* was a perennial sales loser, kept going solely due to licensing considerations. Realization came soon after he met the series' writer and shared his enthusiasm for the new assignment. "He looked at me like we had just won the booby prize," Heck says wryly.

But the opportunity to ink helped offset the disappointment. Other features soon fell into his lap, as well. "I did *The Flash*," notes Heck. "I did three issues of *Green Lantern*. I was all over the place."

Heck found his *Flash* tenure frustrating. "I was hamstrung," he laments. "I was told to use multiple image shots. I wanted the Flash done where you didn't see these little individual figures doing things. He's a blur—or he was supposed to be as far as I was concerned. Then one day, they said, 'You're off *The Flash* because Carmine Infantino's back.' Obviously, it was his book, so they gave it to him again. And what did they do? They allowed him to do the same stuff *I* wanted to do!"

One of the biggest challenges, Heck found, was working with the writers. "There was one thing that was unbelievable," he chuckles. "The Flash and his girl friend were ringing the doorbell, and he comes to the door as his normal self. But you're supposed to see the Flash go into the apartment, swing around, come back as Barry Allen and meet *himself* at the door. I did the shot. And the writer said to me, 'Gee, I was wondering how you were going to do that.' And I thought, 'God!' "

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
"ONCE AN AVENGER"
FEELING HE HAS FAILED AS LEADER CAPTAIN AMERICA, LAST ISSUE, WALKED OUT ON THE AVENGERS! AND NOW THAT HE IS GONE, THE SQUABBLING BEGINS ..
LOOK, DON'T BLAME ME! I DIDN'T TELL HAWKEYE TO TAKE A POWDER!
PERHAPS NOT IN SO MANY WORDS, BUT YOU CONSTANTLY MOCKED HIM AND CHALLENGED HIS LEADERSHIP!
NOW SEE WHAT YOUR TAUNTS HAVE ACCOMPLISHED!
HE MAY YET RETURN TO US! AFTER ALL, WHERE ELSE CAN HE GO?
Art: Don Heck/John Romita

Hawkeye's change of heart—from villain to good guy—was masterminded by Stan Lee. "He probably saw Hawkeye as a Robin Hood type," acknowledges Heck.

THERE AREN'T ENOUGH MENACES ON EARTH TO ENDANGER YOU WHILE HAWKEYE LIVES!
NO, YOU FOOL! WAIT!
WAIT?? FOR WHAT? "YOU'RE IN DANGER." MY ARROWS ARE READY! THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS!
THERE IS NO DANGER .. NOT TO ANY BUT THE AVENGERS!! THE SWORDSMAN AND POWER MAN ARE MY ALLIES ... AS YOU SHALL BE, ALSO
YOU MEAN, YOU'VE JOINED FORCES WITH THEM ... AGAINST THE AVENGERS!?
NO... THEY HAVE JOINED THE BLACK WIDOW!!
HER VOICE IS COLD.. EMOTIONLESS! CAP WAS RIGHT! SHE HAS BEEN BRAINWASHED!
WHO CHALLENGES THE AVENGERS, CHALLENGES HAWKEYE!
SWORDSMAN!! POWER MAN!! PROTECT YOURSELVES! HE'S ATTACKING!
BUT, I CAN'T FORSAKE THE ONLY GIRL I'VE EVER LOVED! I'VE GOT TO FREE HER FROM THESE TWO, AND FIND SOME WAY OF BRINGING HER TO HER SENSES!!
FOR ALL HIS BLUSTER, I FEARED HE WOULD NEVER JOIN US; THEREFORE, HE MUST BE DEFEATED!
Art: Don Heck/Frank Giacoia

Changes in the Avengers' line-up surprised Heck, but he chalked it up to continuity hassles.

Next came a year-long stint on *Justice League of America* "DC wanted me to do it," Heck says flatly. "I didn't. I didn't like the guy who was inking it, and I didn't want him pulled off the story for me, so I said I would rather not do it. Then, one day they told me, 'You're doing it, but we got a different inker.' "

Despite having successfully guided the Avengers for so long, Heck didn't enjoy drawing *Justice League*. "It was strange to me, all those different characters," he muses. "With 20 different characters, it was, 'You open the door; I'll look through it.' In other words, there was nothing great happening. One character could have done

"I was never that keen on superheroes," Heck says, but he succeeded in working with them for over 40 years.

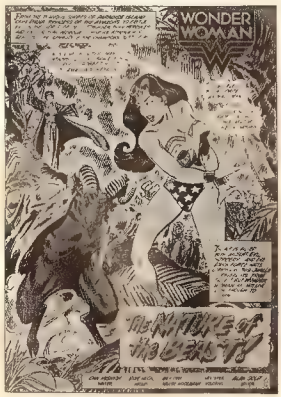
RA GIVE US LIGHT AND UNDERSTANDING-- THIS IS MADNESS!
THIS CITY WAS DESTROYED BY A NUCLEAR BLAST-- BUT NOT RECENTLY!
THE RUBBLE IS COLD...THE AIR'S LIKE ICE!
ARE YOU SURE THIS IS EARTH-PRIME, GREEN LANTERN?
MY POWER RING CONFIRMS IT, KARA...
THIS IS WHERE THE HOLE IN REALITY LED US.

Art: Don Heck/Romeo Tanghal

The Justice League's multitude of characters puzzled Heck, "If you've got Superman, why the hell do you need the others?"

■

Working for more than one company simultaneously would have been too much for the artist who feared similar deadlines.



the whole damn thing, so why have four or five superheroes doing it? If you've got Superman, why the hell do you need the others?

"I was never that keen on superheroes," Heck adds. "I always liked regular stories—people as people. I like somebody if you shoot them and they bleed. Otherwise, there's no feeling. It's like Arnold Schwarzenegger, the Terminator. He blows apart, then he gets up and starts walking again. That, to me, is a *meaningless* story."

During the '80s, Heck bounced back and forth between DC and Marvel, with one period at Martin Goodman's short-lived Atlas Comics, spending most of his time at DC. He rarely worked for both companies at once.

"I would rather work for just one," he professes, "because you can only do so much. Now if you happen to be like Kirby or John Buscema where you can turn in five pages a day, then it's different and you can handle all that stuff. I always wound up where both deadlines were the same week. Unless you have people helping you, you can't do it. And I *never* had anyone helping me, because if you did have somebody who was good enough, the following Monday he was up there getting his own work."

Overnight, everything changed. "I worked at DC for 11 years straight," Heck recalls. "Then suddenly, I didn't have any work, bang, bang. I knew the handwriting was on the wall when Dick Giordano said to me, 'If somebody offers you work, take it.' "

Returning to Marvel, Heck found himself again working on familiar characters, including inking his old friend, Hawkeye, over Al Milgrom's pencils in *Avengers Spotlight*.

"Hawkeye was fun to do," Heck says. "They changed his costume so he was all over the place, and that didn't work out that well. Half of it had to be whited out. They changed the face, sent it to me and said, 'This is the final version.' "

These days, Don Heck continues to draw for Marvel, and accepts freelance assignments from Millennium, where he did the short-lived *H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu* comic. For Topps, he pencilled *Night Glider*, based on a Jack Kirby concept.

Perhaps his most unusual assignment in recent years was to re-create several *Iron Man* pages so a story could be reprinted in the *Marvel Masterworks* edition of *Iron Man*. The original art and stats could not be found, and since Heck's style hasn't changed appreciably in the last 30 years, redrawing the missing pages solved the problem perfectly.

It's a rare artist who could pull off such a feat. Still, the assignments don't come as regularly as they used to, which Heck finds puzzling. "If you were doing bad work and your artwork had done a tumble, you could say, 'OK, I deserve this.' But when it's looking good, you ask, 'Why?' Sometimes editors say, 'Oh, yeah, I love your stuff,' but you don't get the calls."

After 40 years on the comics scene, Heck has seen many of his contemporaries leave the business—not always of their own volition. One was his fellow Media Comics cohort, Pete Morisi, who, as P.A.M., created Thunderbolt for Charlton.

"When comics went down, Pete Morisi became a cop," Heck relates. "He drew well, but he copied George Tuska too closely. And after a while, Tuska's stuff wasn't selling. It's one of those setups: You pick the wrong stuff and you're in trouble."

Heck never fell into that trap. He always stayed true to his own style, but the industry hasn't always treated him with respect. And he has qualms about recommending the comics field he loves to aspiring young artists.

"It's like a kid I know who's doing terrific artwork," says Heck. "I keep telling him the truth. I say, 'Think about some other type of art. You're always going to want to draw, but think of some other stuff so that you can branch out, so you're not stuck with a bunch of idiots.' "

Still, despite his pointed assessments of the field, Don Heck himself professes no lasting regret that he stuck it out in comics. "It's that kind of business," he reflects. "I would have liked to have hooked up with some good writer and done a newspaper strip, but it's a little late now. The good part about comics is that you get to draw all sorts of stuff that you like to do. If you work for an advertising place, you draw a lot of boring stuff, which you hate. In comics, you can draw characters, scenes, everything you can think of. It *can* be great." ■

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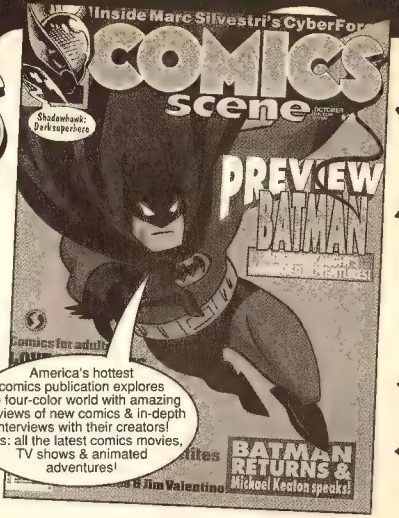
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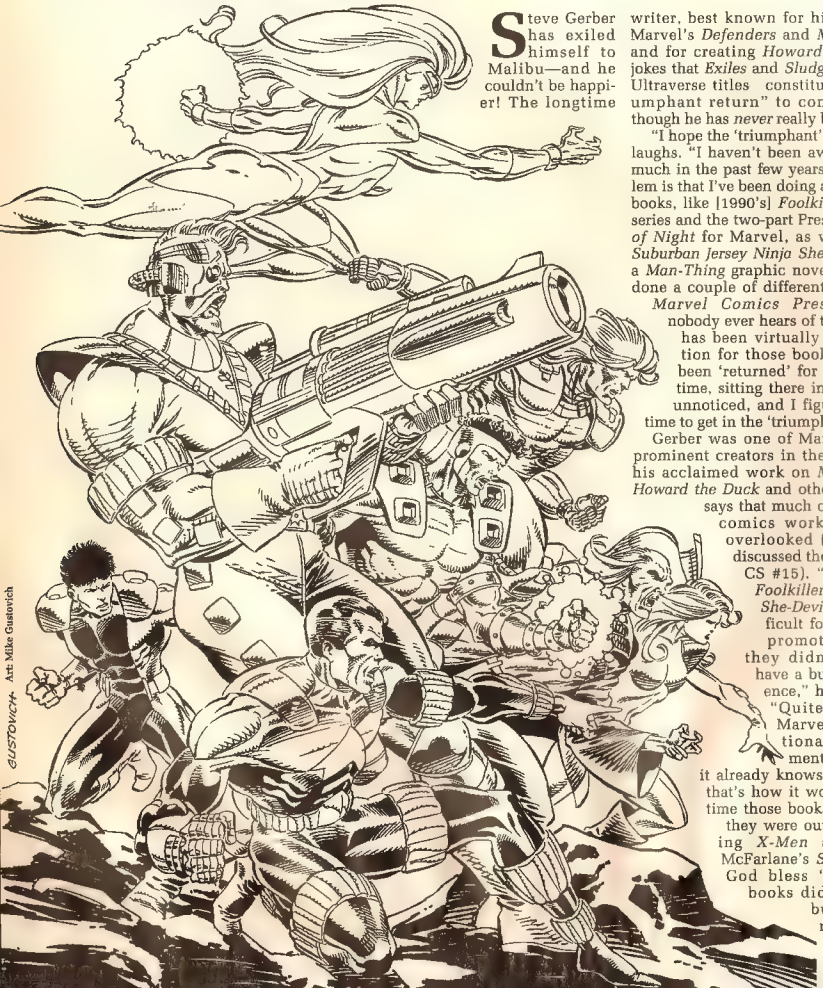
THE GERBER STORY

His typical tale is quirky, peculiar & slightly askew—or so says Steve Gerber.

By KIM HOWARD JOHNSON



DUSTOWICH Art: Mike Gustovich

Steve Gerber has exiled himself to Malibu—and he couldn't be happier! The longtime writer, best known for his work on Marvel's *Defenders* and *Man-Thing*, and for creating *Howard the Duck*, jokes that *Exiles* and *Sludge*—his new Ultraverse titles constitute his "triumphant return" to comics, even though he has *never* really been away.

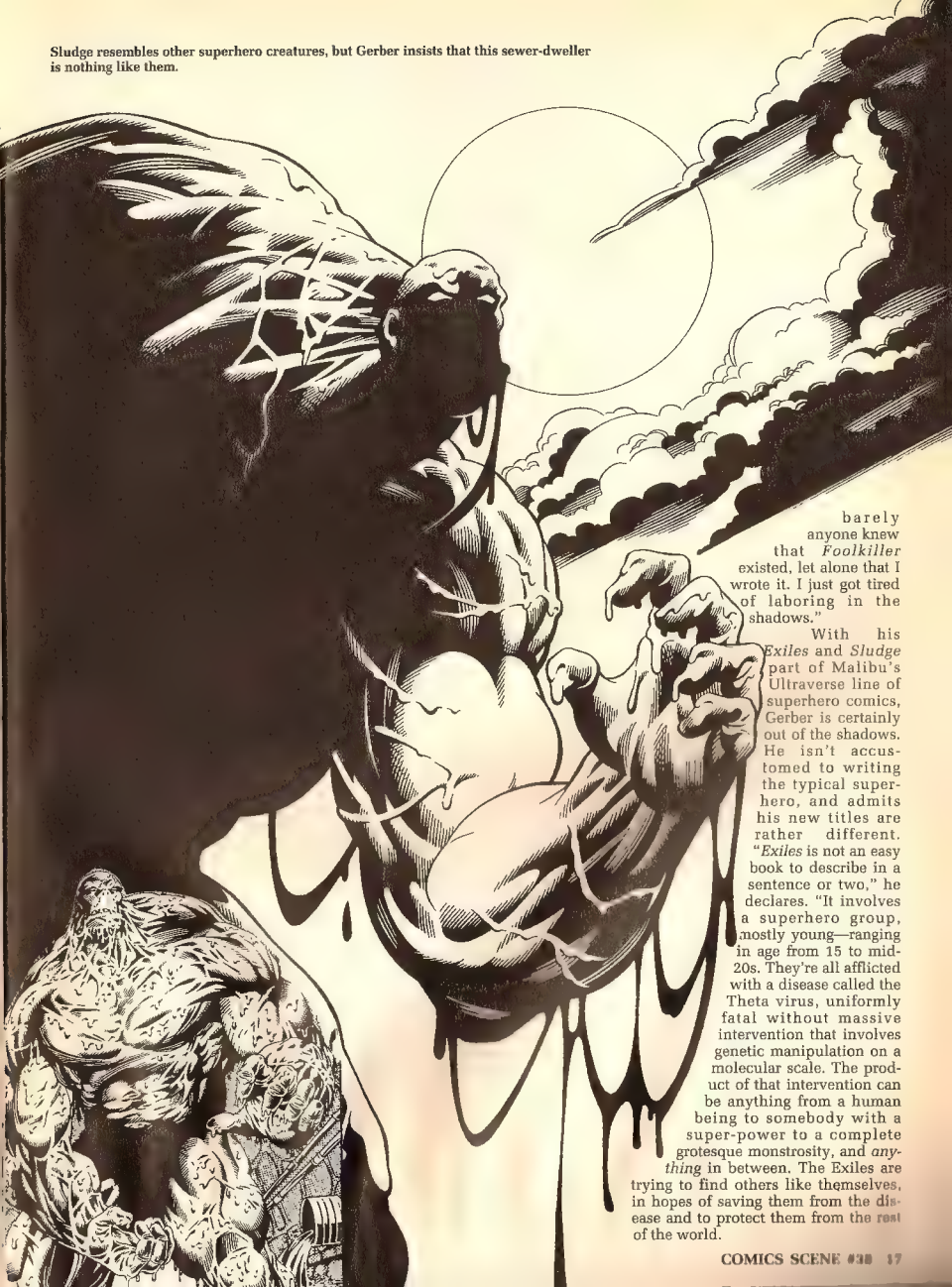
"I hope the 'triumphant' is true," he laughs. "I haven't been away all that much in the past few years. The problem is that I've been doing a number of books, like [1990's] *Foolkiller* limited series and the two-part Prestige *Legion of Night* for Marvel, as well as the *Suburban Jersey Ninja She-Devils* and a *Man-Thing* graphic novel. I've also done a couple of different serials for *Marvel Comics Presents*, but nobody ever hears of them. There has been virtually no promotion for those books. So, I've been 'returned' for quite some time, sitting there in the corner unnoticed, and I figured it was time to get in the 'triumphant' part!"

Gerber was one of Marvel's most prominent creators in the '70s, with his acclaimed work on *Man-Thing*, *Howard the Duck* and other titles. He says that much of his recent comics work has been overlooked (though he discussed the projects in CS #15). "Books like *Foolkiller* and *Jersey She-Devils* were difficult for Marvel to promote because they didn't already have a built-in audience," he observes. "Quite frankly, Marvel's promotional department sells what it already knows will sell—that's how it works. At the time those books came out, they were out there selling *X-Men* and Todd McFarlane's *Spider-Man*. God bless 'em, those books did just fine, but in the meantime,

Art: Aaron Lopresti/Gary Martin

All Exiles & Sludge Art: Trademark & Copyright 1993 Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc.

Art: Aaron Lopresti



Sludge resembles other superhero creatures, but Gerber insists that this sewer-dweller is nothing like them.

barely anyone knew that *Foolkiller* existed, let alone that I wrote it. I just got tired of laboring in the shadows."

With his *Exiles* and *Sludge* part of Malibu's Ultraverse line of superhero comics, Gerber is certainly out of the shadows. He isn't accustomed to writing the typical superhero, and admits his new titles are rather different. "*Exiles* is not an easy book to describe in a sentence or two," he declares. "It involves a superhero group, mostly young—ranging in age from 15 to mid-20s. They're all afflicted with a disease called the Theta virus, uniformly fatal without massive intervention that involves genetic manipulation on a molecular scale. The product of that intervention can be anything from a human being to somebody with a super-power to a complete grotesque monstrosity, and *anything* in between. The Exiles are trying to find others like themselves, in hopes of saving them from the disease and to protect them from the rest of the world.

"They're unusual, because nobody can find out how they got their powers; they're worried about being considered contagious. It's an unusual concept, but I don't want to give the impression that it's a gimmick book—it relies very heavily on the characters to anchor the stories. There's a good bit of action and humor in it, but it's essentially a character-driven book."

Exiles starts out with group members Tinsel, Catapult, Deadeye, Mustang, Trax and Ghoul, and En Flame and Mastodon, two characters introduced in the first issue. Gerber laughs as he struggles to remember them all. "Tinsel has the ability to manipulate light, and Mustang does similar things with electricity. Catapult can re-channel the inertial energy in a resting object against that object, which allows him to pick up automobiles or small buildings—anything that his exoskeleton can support. Deadeye has a nearly infallible sense of aim, so that almost anything in his hands becomes a weapon. Trax can follow and locate anyone with whom he has ever had direct physical contact, and Ghoul is seemingly a zombie impervious to pain.

"And then, we have the villains Happy, Dopey, Sleepy," he jokes. "The central villain is actually Malcolm Kort, a Hollywood producer who's not content to merely create worlds in the studio. He wants to re-shape the world according to his own vision of the future of humanity. Among his henchmen are Brute, Bloodbath, Hot Rox and assorted scientists and robots."

SO, CONSIDER THE PLIGHT OF HOWARD THE DUCK!
FOR MONTHS, BY OUR RECKONING, HE HAS BEEN FALLING THROUGH THIS UN-WORLD, THIS VOID BETWEEN...
...ALONE WITH HIS THOUGHTS IN SOUNDLESS SPACE, LEFT TO WONDER WHETHER OR NOT HE EXISTS.
FROG DEATH
Howard the Duck: Trademark & Copyright 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group

Taking comics from a different perspective than other writers, Gerber is known more for offbeat books like *Howard the Duck*.

The central character, Dr. Rachel Deming, has set up a corporate and team headquarters on an island off the California coast. "She discovered the Theta virus and its cure, because she *had* it. Rachel is 68 years old and looks 34—the treatment prevented her from visibly aging," he says. "She goes with the team on some missions, and directs them from their headquarters at other times. She has set up a corporation to fund research into the disease, and to find the people who have it."

Art: Darick Robertson

***Exiles*' creation predates the Ultraverse, but Gerber's storyline fit the piece into the line's intricate puzzle.**

Exiles was actually the first Ultraverse series created, pre-dating the rest of the new line. "It wasn't originally intended for the Ultraverse," Gerber admits. "This series actually goes back about a year-and-a-half before the first Ultraverse writers' conference. The book was actually created by [Malibu execs] Dave Olbrich, Tom Mason and Chris Ulm. They had done the script's first draft, and had done dialogue for the first 12 pages, and then the book sat around the office for months while Malibu got involved with Image. They were going to give it to me to take over, and I was going to come in and do it as a stand-alone title like *The Protectors*. After the Ultraverse meetings got underway, we realized there was nothing in *Exiles* that contradicted anything in the Ultraverse stuff, and we might as well just pull it in and make it part of the larger line!"

The writer has big plans for the series which is being pencilled by Paul Pelletier and inked by Ken Branch, and says issue #4 will be "one of the most memorable issues in the history of comic books—but I can't say why. This is something you have *never* seen before in exactly this way, and it will affect the entire Ultraverse. Nobody will ever forget having read *Exiles* #4, that I can absolutely promise!"

Gerber's other Ultraverse series, *Sludge* with pencils by Aaron Lopresti and inks by Gary Martin, is also tricky to describe. "Because of my history in this business, people ask me if it's *Man-Thing*, and the answer is no; then they'll ask me if it's *Swamp Thing*, and the

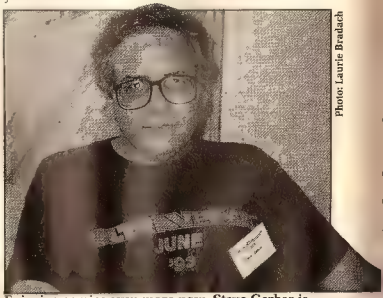


Photo: Laurie Bradach

Enjoying comics even more now, Steve Gerber is making his "triumphant return" after never leaving the industry.

answer is no, then they'll ask if it's like the Thing, and the answer is still no—they'll go through a whole list of things and mans and swamps, but no," Gerber says. "It's sort of a monster book, sort of a hero book, sort of a horror book, and it takes place in New York. Sludge is a creature living in the sewers of New York. I've described him as 'Clint Eastwood, but he drips a lot.' It's probably the darkest of all the Ultraverse books in tone and story matter, *very* grim stuff. The one thing I hope it will have in common with *Man-Thing* over time is that we'll be able to do almost *any* story we want in there.

"The first few issues of *Sludge* will deal with fairly heavy and realistic stories. We have a cop story in the first issue, and an urban assassin story in the second. I'm hoping we'll be able to broaden it to deal with barbarians jumping out of peanut butter jars," he laughs. "It'll take some time, though."

Comparisons to *Man-Thing* are probably inevitable, but Gerber's hoping to avoid any resemblance through the urban setting and other factors. "Sludge talks and even narrates part of the book, but in a very strange style, an internal dialogue," he says. "But, I did insist that he actually speak—I wasn't going to do more years of a character that can't speak again! He *does* speak, he *is* conscious and he's not empathic in any way. It's a very different character from Man-Thing although there are surface similarities. Most of the origin is in the first issue, except for a few details. We know what happens, but we don't know exactly *why* it happens—that will be revealed over time."

DON'T PUSH IT, TRACKER. YOU'RE STARTIN' TO GET ON MY NERVES!
MOVE IT OR LOSE IT, DEADEYE! LOOKS LIKE IVAN HAS LEARNED A FEW NEW TRICKS!
SKRA-KOOOM
I'VE GOT TO DISABLE THE CYBERNOVAS WITHOUT HITTING THE STUDENTS...
THIS BLAST OF CONCENTRATED LIGHT SHOULD DO IT!
MMMRREEEEE
SKRAGGG
FIZZZZT
HEY! WATCH IT!
THAT ALMOST HIT ME!
Art: Rob Prince/Ken Branch
Design & Layout: Jim McLernon

This may look like a typical hero team book, but *Exiles* takes a "Gerber approach" in that the group may be considered contagious.

Gerber says his experiences have only been good in helping to create a brand-new universe for Malibu. "Twenty years ago, the Marvel Universe wasn't that old, either! It was almost like this, but this is the first time I've ever been in on the ground floor of creating a new universe. The only minuses in a situation like this would be for writers and artists, who feel they need someone else's work to build upon. For anybody who's accustomed to doing original stuff, there are no minuses. The pluses are that there aren't 30 years of excess baggage that you must deal with every time you write a line of dialogue or plot a scene. It's tremendously liberating! The last time I tried to write any of the Marvel mainstream characters, I felt shackled and—I'll probably get in trouble for saying this—seriously bored! There's very little about those characters that hasn't already been said, and if there's anything, I couldn't think of it. So, for me, it's an absolute joy to be working on characters nobody has done before," Gerber declares.

Malibu's Ultraverse titles are interconnected, but Gerber says they certainly won't be strangled by restrictions. "The minimum basic requirement is that we won't do anything in *Sludge* or *Exiles* that directly or irrevocably contradicts something that's done in any of the other books. The tie-ins between books are being organized much the same way we used to do it at Marvel. In the old days, if I wanted to use Captain America in a *Defenders* story, I would call Steve Englehart, who was writing *Captain America* at the time, and say, 'Hey, can I use Cap in *Defenders*?' We would check it with the editor, and if he said fine, we did the story, and made accommodations for whatever Steve was doing in *Captain America*, to make it work with that book's continuity. We're doing the exact same thing here."

In addition to his Ultraverse books at Malibu, Gerber is also doing some work for Image, scripting the *Cybernary* story in *Deathblow*, and also a *WildC.A.T.s Special*. "Jim Lee asked me to take a crack at the *Cybernary* strip based on a few *WildC.A.T.s* pages I had scripted," he says. "The strip has already been plotted, drawn and inked before I ever saw it—a couple of people had already tried writing scripts for it, but they weren't really happy with what they had gotten. They liked what I did. So, I had nothing to do with the first two stories whatsoever; I'm simply dialoguing the finished artwork. I'll probably be writing the full script with the third chapter. *Cybernary* is much darker in tone, though *Sludge* comes pretty close. I know what Jim and Brandon Choi have set up with the character, and I want to see where they were planning to take it before I put my own twist on it."

Gerber admits that he may seem like a peculiar choice to write the *WildC.A.T.s Special*. Interested in working for Image for some time, Gerber got a phone call one day from Jim Lee. "Jim asked me if I wanted to do the book, and I actually like *WildC.A.T.s* quite a bit, so I decided to take a shot at it. It's an interesting story—it's a Gerber story, no question about it, but it's also a *WildC.A.T.s* story, and I don't think any of the

regular *WildC.A.T.s* readers will find it incompatible with the rest of the series. On the other hand, I think anyone who reads it will not find it incompatible with anything I've done over the past 20 years!"

Largely known for his work on more peculiar comics titles, the writer admits that a typical "Gerber story" is certainly quirky. "I don't know exactly how to define a 'Gerber story,' though, other than to say that it comes from my own peculiar perspective on whatever I happen to be writing about. For some reason, it seems to be fairly recognizable," he laughs. "I wouldn't begin to say what a 'Gerber story' actually is, but it's recognizably one that I've written. Quirky, with a slightly askew, bent perspective on things."

After two decades in comics, Gerber is still most strongly identified with *Howard the Duck*, which he wrote and created. It's a relationship that can either work for or against him. "For the people who know the comic book, it certainly works in my favor, but people who know the film and don't know the comic—I don't think I can get in their door, actually!" he laughs, noting that the week after the movie opened to savage reviews and disappointing box-office receipts, "I started shopping around for cliffs to jump off of!"

The *Howard the Duck* film, which was one of the most spectacular and visible failures in film history, went wrong in several fundamental ways, according to Gerber (who also discussed the film in STARLOG #111). "I don't want to second-guess somebody else's work, but I don't think the movie worked at all. If I had to point to a single thing that went wrong, it would be that they let the so-called requirements of a Hollywood picture, rather than their love for the comic book and the character, drive what finally got on the screen. I'm incredibly sad for them, as much as for myself and for the Duck—it was a real shame it happened the way it did."

The writer says he has three or four favorite characters and stories from his comics career, but the *Giant-Size Man-Thing* story "The Kid's Night Out" comes to mind. "That was a big one for me, and a lot of the *Man-Thing* stuff I did with Mike Ploog in general," he says. "There were a number of others—some of the Val Mayerik stuff as well, and 'Cry Turnip!' and the nervous breakdown story arc from *Howard the Duck*, as well as the *Phantom Zone* mini-series that I did for DC. Those are ones that come to mind immediately.

"I honestly think the *best* thing I've ever done in comics, though, is probably the *Foolkiller* limited series. It goes deeper into a single character, without relying on clichés, than anything I've done prior to that time. The rules I set for myself with that book, though, were 'no easy outs.' Whatever happens has to be absolutely believable; the one fantasy element is the ray gun—everything else has to be completely plausible or it doesn't get in the book. That forced me to really look at that character as a human being in a real environment, and try to predict what a character like that would do and why he would do it. I'm really proud of what I did with the characterizations—I don't think I've ever done anything that remotely resembles it."

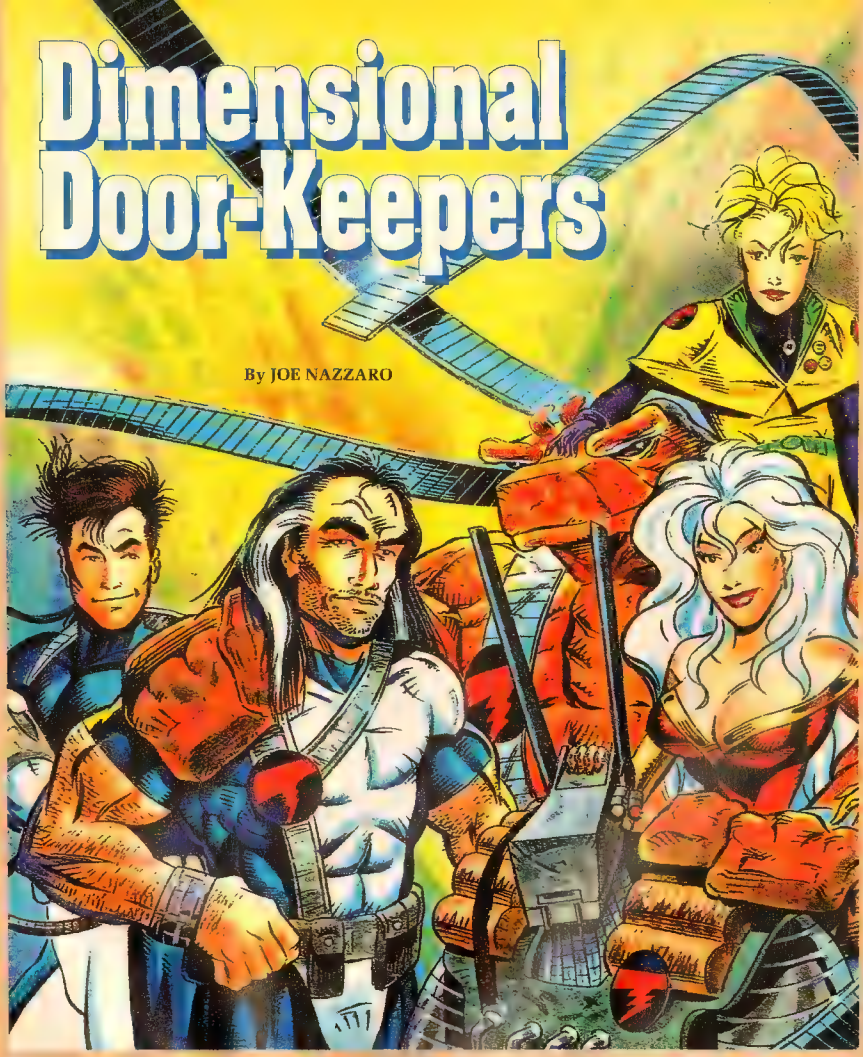
Although he looks back fondly on his previous work, Steve Gerber is more thrilled at the prospects of the Ultraverse that lie ahead. "I'm proud of the past, but I'm much more excited about the future. There's a funny expression attributed to Howard Chaykin—and if he wants credit for it, it's his—that 'no-stalgia is good stalgia.' That's exactly the way I feel about this stuff. I like a lot of the *Howard the Duck* stories, I like a lot of the *Man-Thing* stories, but I'm not sentimental about them in the slightest; the stuff I'm doing now is generally better. It's a shame that people haven't known that much of it existed, but the Ultraverse and Image stuff will change that. I'm much more concerned and interested in the work I'm doing now!"

"*Sludge* is sort of a monster book, sort of a hero book, sort of a horror book," Gerber says.

Art: Aaron Lopresti/Gary Martin

Dimensional Door-Keepers

By JOE NAZZARO



All Xenotech Art & Characters: By, Trademark & Copyright 1993 Michael Dooney

When monsters knock, Xenotech battles who's there.

The latest company to enter the New Universe Market is Mirage Publishing, probably best known for those wise-cracking, pizza-eating Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. This summer, Mirage expands their line with the Next Universe, three interrelated superhero titles, consisting of *Stupid Heroes*, written by *Turtles* creator Peter Laird: *Bioneers*, by A.C. Farley; and *Xenotech*, written and drawn by Michael Dooney.

For Dooney, who has spent most of the last five years working with a group of anthropomorphic turtles, *Xenotech* is a chance to do something a bit different. "It's a superhero book that takes place on Earth," he says, explaining the premise of his new project. "It starts with a benevolent alien race called the Tessadi, who have been opening interdimensional doorways all over the universe as a form of space travel. They've been doing it for ages, but they discover that these doorways have also been reopening without warning, and this provides an access

Starker Helm:

Xenotech's experienced leader who's not of this world.

In a Crossover Special, Michael Dooney continues the story begun in *Savage Dragon* #2 wherein the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles meet that big green guy.

Savage Dragon: Trademark & Copyright 1993 Erik Larsen

Turtles: Trademark & Copyright 1993 Mirage Studios

Art: Michael Dooney/Erik Larsen/Colors: Michael Dooney

route for less benevolent creatures to drop by all the planets the Tessadi visited in peace.

"The aliens try to go back and close all these rifts they opened, but find out it's not possible, so instead, they set up a network of 'arming the natives,' so to speak, where they pick a team of watchdogs for anything that might come through. They arm them with high technology equipment as a deterrent force, and that's where I got the name for the book: 'xeno,' meaning alien or strange, and tech, which is short for technology.

"At first glance, the group looks like regular humans, but they have these battle suits they can summon up and wear. One of the characters actually looks like an alien creature when you first see him, but that's just what his suit looks like. He's probably the most visible one."

Running through the *Xenotech* roster, Dooney begins with Chunk, the character he has just mentioned. "Whenever you're putting together comics, you tend to think of certain archetypes found in a group, and you need to have someone who's capable of great strength for rassling with the big monsters we need to have in comics.

"Chunk is our big muscle guy. He was a police officer before being recruited by the aliens, and now he's on an extended leave of absence from the force. I'm going to play around with the fact that he was a cop for years, and had to deal with situations on a very 'regulation basis,' with red tape and paperwork. Now, he's getting off on being part of this team. His job is to kick butt if necessary, and since the group is sanctioned by the different world governments, he doesn't have to answer to them if he does the job.

"Basically, Chunk has the most visible non-human battle suit. It's an exoskeleton that goes over his entire body, and although we normally see him in a 'rocky' state, he has the ability to change the composition and texture of his outer shell. The shape is the same, but the skin's texture will be different; from rock to chrome to whatever.

"In *Maelstrom*, the crossover book, which will be tying these three titles together, Chunk's going to be involved in a firefight. He'll be shifting his shell to compensate for the heat; maybe even changing to that space-age ceramic they use for the space shuttle. I don't want to make him into one of the Metal Men, where he can turn into *anything*, but I want to have a few variations on the theme."

The leader of *Xenotech* is Starker Helm, a character Dooney originally created for *Gizmo*, another Mirage book. "He's the one group member who doesn't have any sort of battle

suit. He's human, but not from Earth, and he was the first one chosen to be this new group's leader.

"We'll find out later that there were previous Xenotech teams on Earth, some more successful than others, and the most recent team before this one was inexperienced and badly trained, so they didn't last long. The Tessadi don't want to make the same mistake twice, so this time they started with an experienced battle leader, and built the team around him."

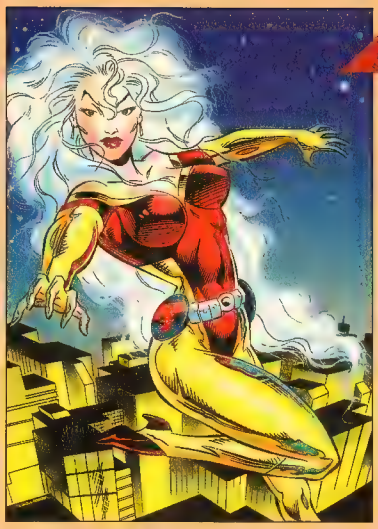
Dooney hints that there's much more to Starker Helm, but he's in no hurry to reveal any secrets. "One of the things people will pick up on is that I did a short story with him once before, in the *Gizmo* series a few years ago. Even then, I had ideas for him which I didn't get to do, but now I'm going back to them. I have a history in my head of where he has been and why he's there, which will make it easier for me to write the character, and drop hints along the way."

The next *Xenotech* member is Gunner, who Dooney describes as the group's glitzy pyrotechnic. "He has a harness on his back that's basically a big chemistry set, and he can mix and shoot different substances through these gauntlets on his arms, hence the name. In the first issue, I have him shooting flames and stuff, but anything I can think of that's appropriate, I'll do. I've already thought about Gunner using things like liquid nitrogen, but he could even use substances as simple as water, if the situation called for it. Some compounds will be more flamboyant and colorful than others."

Acting as the group's source of exposition is Haywire, a robot who has also been involved with other Xenotech teams in the past. "He will be the reader's insight into the aliens' mysterious aspects," Dooney explains. "He and Starker are not from Earth, so he has a lot of experiences from different planets and different dimensions.

"I'm actually calling Haywire a 'symbot,' and we'll be finding out later on that he's linked to Starker Helm, so they have a real rapport between them. Haywire has many of the characteristics of a faithful hunting dog. He's obviously much more intelligent than that, but he has a dog's loyalty. He has been with Starker Helm for years, and must be constantly reminded that he's a member of a team. That means he has to look out for *all* the team members, not just Starker's safety, which is what he has been doing for years."

One of Haywire's responsibilities is monitoring where and when a dimensional rift will reopen. "That's one function, but the group also has a command center where they can track this activity. Their base is in the imagi-

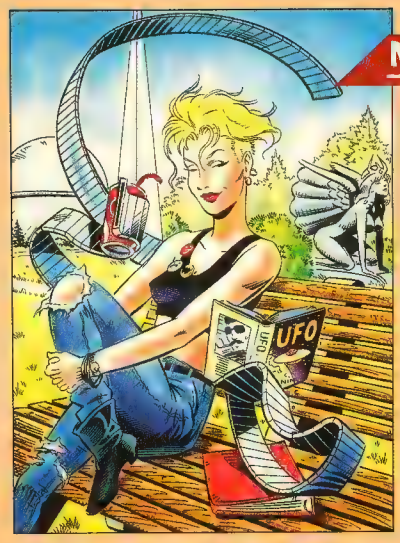


Pulse:

Her Xenotech suit gives her freedom to do what she longs to do.

Haywire:

Loyal as a hunting dog, the robot provides an insight to the aliens.



She's drawn to the team by agony and a homing device.

More human than he looks, he's the group's strong man.

Design & Layout: Calvin Lee

nary restored 1939 World's Fair grounds, which I've brought back for this series. If you look at the original pictures of the 1939 World's Fair, there was a lot of neat architecture there, and I always thought it was a great loss that they took it all down. I've brought it all back, and made the fairground the base for the Xenotech team and corporation."

Moving on to Pulse, Dooney explains how important the battle suits are to certain group members, and what price they must pay for that power. "With Pulse, her suit allows her to project force fields as weapons, and also allows her to fly. In the second issue, we learn that she has been a cripple since birth, and without the suit, she's confined to a wheelchair. Because Pulse revels in the freedom the suit gives her, she's more than happy to be a team member.

"The suits actually exist in a slightly different dimension than our own, and the team members simply have to call them up, and they appear on them. I'm putting a time limit on the suits. Pulse would be happy to keep the suit on all the time, but it starts to have a debilitating effect if you wear it for too long.

"There's a female character introduced at the first issue's end, and that situation is exactly what she's going through. She has had her suit on for too long, and it's starting to give her headaches and pain, and she doesn't know why. The suit has a homing device built into it, and that's why she finds herself drawn to the Xenotech Headquarters."

That final member is Medusa, and as Dooney points out, her membership in the group isn't exactly voluntary. "None of these characters were chosen because of their warrior abilities," he notes. "They were chosen, and now have to be trained, so she'll have to be added to the group's training program. *None* of these people are volunteers, and that's something I'll be playing up in later issues.

"Here we have this alien group that's endowing the team members with these suits and powers, and while it's a benevolent race, their methods of securing these 'vortex teams,' as I call them, are highly questionable. They were looking for people with a specific genetic makeup who could wear the battle suits, and they've even tinkered around with their genes to make them closer to what's needed. Unfortunately, the aliens never bothered to ask the subjects if this was OK."

Besides Xenotech, Dooney will also be introducing other characters, who are more or less free agents. "One of them is named

Harper Bizarre, who I was going to use in the Turtles Universe. She was originally called Radical, and was a mystical, American Indian superhero/Dr. Strange type.

"In early discussions for these books, we thought we might be including the Turtles and the Mirage books as part of the Next Universe, but as we got further into it, we decided not to, and I decided to reinvent some of those characters. I wanted to introduce a magical character to play off all this high technology, so Harper Bizarre will cross paths with the Xenotech team from time to time."

After the first three issues, *Xenotech* will be crossing over with the other two Next books in *Maelstrom*, a one-shot bringing the groups together. "We wanted to have interaction between the different titles," says Dooney, "but since we all had our own scenarios worked out for at least three issues, the most obvious thing was to have them converge after a three-issue run.

"Pete's setting up a chain of events in *Stupid Heroes* that'll culminate in this crossover. The backdrop common to all three books is a disease called Dementia Dominus, which has affected certain superhumans on Earth. Some of them go crazy from it, and at issue #3's end, there's going to be an incident that calls the Bioneers and Xenotech into service to try and stop somebody."

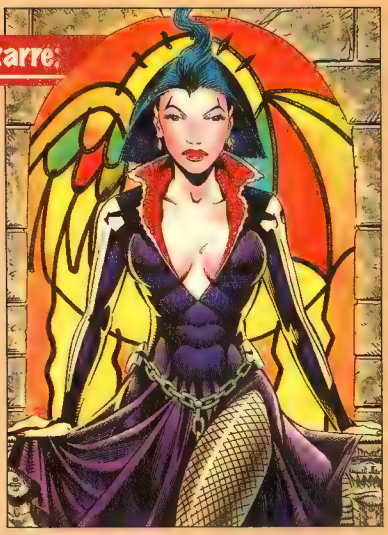
With all the new titles flooding the comics marketplace, Dooney is acutely aware of the heroic competition, but he believes there are enough differences between *Xenotech* and other team titles to make it worth buying. "I know it's impossible to avoid comparisons," he admits, "and when I talk about the book myself, I can't help but name-drop other things I have in my head.

"I know there are a zillion other books out there, but if you look at them closely, many of them are rather homogeneous. They all have the same grim tone, and that's something I've been trying to avoid in *Xenotech*. The 'grim and gritty' tone doesn't have any weight, unless it's balanced by a little characterization, and a little heart. I'm trying to create much more of a Stan Lee/Jack Kirby kind of feel; an action-adventure, as opposed to a 'life is horrible, why am I here?' feel."

Despite the plethora of new universes, books and characters all seeking their own niches, Michael Dooney thinks *Xenotech* will receive the attention it deserves. "One of the questions I haven't been asked is what audience my book is aimed at, or what audience the Next books are being aimed at. When I see the kind of stuff we're doing, I think the reader we're appealing to are readers like me. They like good-looking comics, but with something *to* them. That's what *Xenotech* offers."

Harper Bizarre:

A free agent who'll meet up with Xenotech for a magical interlude.



He's Xenotech's pyrotechnic chemical whiz.

TOMORROW'S MUTANTS

WOW! I CAN TAKE FLIGHT AGAIN
WOW! NO WONDER XI'AN SENT US AFTER YOU
I KNOW OF XI'AN AND HIS GATHERINGS. HE DREAMS OF MAN
I DREAM OF THE EARTH.
PLEASE COME WITH US TO NUEVO SOL. XI'AN WOULD LIKE TO OFFER--
TELL XI'AN I WILL NOT BECOME ANOTHER OF HIS DISCIPLES.
NOT A SECOND YOU GIVE US

John Francis Moore builds the future with "X-Men 2099."

By DREW BITTNER

Almost 100 years from now, who will *remember* today's heroes? Nearly 100 years from now, mutants are an endangered species, hovering on the edge of extinction. But one man's dream can pull them back from the edge—and the name "X-Men" once more becomes a standard to rally mutantkind, a battle cry against oppression, bigotry and hatred, and a family whose bonds are stronger than the fury of their enemies.

As the writer for *X-Men 2099*, John Francis Moore's task is to reveal the next chapter in the saga of Marvel's mutants, by creating the adventures of new heroes using a very familiar name. "They're basically an outlaw desert tribe," he explains. "They're a group of dropouts from the corporate world of the future, societal discards and all kinds of desert lunatics that have come together because of one man's vision. His name is Xi'an Chi Xan, a former outlaw gang member who had a spiritual epiphany. Basically, he found a purpose: He decided to fight against the corporate world's exploitation of humanity, and to create a society where genetics aren't just 'product.' It's a really nasty place the X-Men live in, and Xi'an wants to change it."

He adds that the corporations will be more in the background than in Marvel's other *2099* titles; they won't be primary antagonists for this group of X-Men. "Corporations aren't going to be the villains of the book, like Alchemax is in *Spider-Man* or Pixel was in *Doom* [which Moore also writes]. Corporate culture defines what the America of 2099 is about. It's real hard to get around that," he admits.

Nevertheless, the mutants are giving it their best shot, with a powerhouse lineup. "Xi'an is the leader," Moore says. "He used to be a member of this group called 'the Lawless,' but then he got a sense of purpose. He's enigmatic; he's pretty much the Professor X or Cable of this team, in terms of his focus as the founder, but he's younger than those two characters and more a peer of his team. His 'voice of authority' is challenged much more often, and he can't bring them into line. Xi'an's left hand is malformed, and can disrupt the molecules of whatever it touches, so he usually keeps his hand covered.

"Second-in-command is Cerebra, a rather emotionless Indian woman who can recognize mutants instinctually. I like writing her, because I think there's a lot to her that'll be fun to explore. Meanstreak is our speedster, and he's the technical expert and media pirate of the group," Moore says. "He's also the rogue of the group, and I mean that in a few ways. He's roguish in terms of his attitude and demeanor; for example, he has a very black sense of humor.

"Krystalin is sort of a New Age 'earth mother' to the group," Moore says. "She's much more humanitarian in the way she fights, though she can be very combative. She can manifest crystalline projections of various sizes and shapes, which can be used defensively or offensively.

"Another member of the group is Metalhead, who absorbs the properties of any metal he touches. He wears bands of different metals on his body so that he can change into them when he needs to. He's a musician by trade, a syntho-percussionist, and he uses his body in his act to create all these different tones. He's probably one of the most committed to Xi'an's dream—he follows Xi'an anywhere, while someone like Meanstreak won't blindly accept everything Xi'an says."

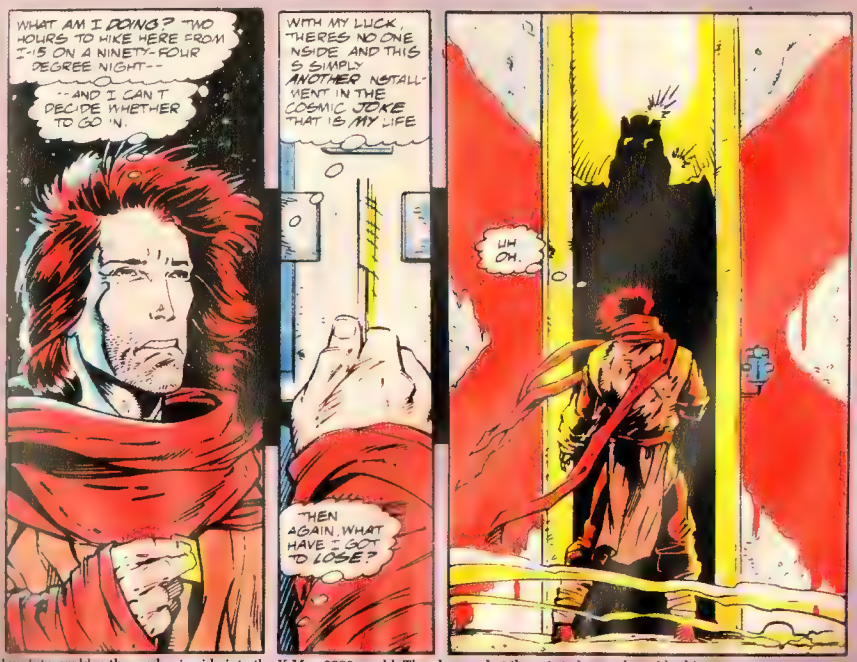
The group's youngest member is a 17-year-old named Serpentina, a runaway street kid rescued by Xi'an. "I'm hoping she isn't too obnoxious," Moore says lightly. "She has a pliable skeleton, which lets her bend and compress and do all sorts of things."

His last two heroes don't even start out in the X-Men, but join the group as the series gets underway. "There's Tim Fitzgerald, who'll be called either Skullfire or Screaming Fitz," he explains. "When his mutant powers manifested, they destroyed the low-level corporate fast track he was on. He was a mechanic for the Synthia Food Corp., but then got powers like Bishop—he absorbs ambient energy and redirects it, though he has no control over his power at all. He has been trying to survive on the streets before hooking up with the X-Men."

Tim will be the team's focal character, easing the readers into their world and learning alongside them as the X-Men's adventures unfold. "He goes from being a very insecure character to being someone I hope readers keep their eye on," the writer says. "The others start looking up to him for his strength of character and willpower, which I think is the kind of positive character development most readers like to see. Basically, the first year is Tim's story, the changes he undergoes in growing from a frightened kid into an X-Man.

"And last but not least, the final member is Bloodhawk, who in his

Xi'an Chi Xan leads the new mutant band to better their world. "It's a really nasty place they live in, and Xi'an wants to change it," says writer John Francis Moore.


WHAT AM I DOING? TWO HOURS TO HIKE HERE FROM I-15 ON A NINETY-FOUR DEGREE NIGHT--
--AND I CAN'T DECIDE WHETHER TO GO 'N.
WITH MY LUCK, THERE'S NO ONE INSIDE AND THIS IS SIMPLY ANOTHER INSTALLMENT IN THE COSMIC JOKE THAT IS MY LIFE
"THEN AGAIN, WHAT HAVE I GOT TO LOSE?
UH OH.

Tim Fitzgerald is the readers' guide into the *X-Men 2099* world. They learn what there is to know alongside this newest mutant.

GOT A REASON TO BE HERE MEAT?
WHAT'S THE MATTER YOU MUTE OR SOMETHIN'? I ASKED YOU A QUESTION
...S NEAN KNOWN-- KINGMAN-- GAVE ME HIS CARD-- SAID I WOULD GET IN
SO SHAKTI FOUND YOU? WONDER WHAT MAKES YOU WORTHY OF THE ICE QUEEN'S PERSONAL ATTENTION?

Xi'an's past haunts the group in the form of Junkpile. "His attitude is that people with power get what they want," Moore says.

human form looks like Peter Garrett of [music group] Midnight Oil," Moore adds. "He changes into this demonic winged creature, a thing of the desert who doesn't have any interest in humans or mutants. Bloodhawk blames mankind for messing up the world by 2099; however, he recognizes that some are more to blame than others, so he chooses to work with the X-Men against the Synge Casino Corp. [one of the team's first opponents]."

The team's first three-part story arc takes place in and around Las Vegas, which is now controlled by a syndicate of overt criminal organizations. One of the top crimelords is assassinated and Xi'an is implicated in the crime, partially with the help of a Judas mutant called Junkpile.

"Junkpile is really their first enemy, and he starts out as one of Xi'an's outlaw buddies," Moore notes. "He's a mutant whose body has been rebuilt with scrap metal—if his arm were blown off, he could reassemble sinew and skin out of the scrap metal around him. Junkpile is incredibly annoyed by Xi'an's messianic posturing, and views the world as something to be used and discarded. His attitude is that people with power get what they want, and others get out of the way or get trampled. So, he has a 'falling out' with Xi'an early on.

"Xi'an is accused of murdering Noah Synge, the [octogenarian] chairman of the board of the Greater Nevada Syndicate, a collection of mobsters who control most of the estate. Synge's son and daughter, Lytton and Desdemona, have their own agendas for taking over, and we see Synge's hired muscle, the Ratpack, take on the X-Men.

"Later, we'll meet a group of twisted individuals who call themselves the Feeder of Pain, decadent people of wealth and ease," Moore says. "They take pleasure in the pain and suffering of others. One of them is Luna, a mutant woman who draws strength from emotional turbulence—she's sort of a psychic vampire. She goes from being a pretty feral creature to a sophisticated and deadly woman, a player on the corporate level as well as on the street-level battlefields the X-Men handle.

"There's also a group called The Freakshow. They're a tribe of 'degens,' people genetically altered by science and not random mutation. They're sort of a hideous legion of monsters.

Despite their power, they can't function in society, so they end up living in the desert, proving to be both allies and enemies of the X-Men."

Xi'an won't just be the leader of a very small organization; he's a popular figure, a messianic individual with a widespread following in the politically divided and socially divisive western U.S. "The X-Men are really Xi'an's strike force, his elite, but Xi'an is a charismatic leader first, a spiritual figure in the American Southwest who's really speaking to the disenfranchised, the homeless, the hopeless—all those who dropped out or never fit in. Using the West works well for this, because it's mythic; it's a big place! Obviously, we can have different groups exist out here, too. Xi'an's group might not be the only one to try and claim the name X-Men, which is an *historical* name, after all."

NOW WATCH EDDIE'S A MUTANT. HE HAS A METALLIC KINETIC ABILITY.
HIS BODY ADOPTS THE PROPERTIES OF ANY METAL HE TOUCHES
BY CHANGING THE TEXTURE OF HIS BODY HE CHANGES THE SOUND BOUNCING OFF HIS BODY
AMAZING. ABSOLUTELY AMAZING.
IF YOU THINK HE'S GREAT, WAIT TILL YOU MEET XI'AN!
HE'LL DO MORE THAN IMPRESS YOU--HE'LL CHANGE YOUR LIFE!

Design & Layout: Jim McLernon

Metalhead "is probably one of the most committed to Xi'an's dream."

Xi'an builds his popularity by assembling huge outdoor festival/political rallies that he calls "gatherings." Moore describes them as barbecues for a few thousand close friends, with a little Woodstock and Fillmore (West and East) thrown in for good measure. "Everybody comes to them—nomad gangs, outlaw groups, everybody," he says.

But while Xi'an spreads his utopian ideals, the rest of the X-Men have plans of their own. "While they're held together by Xi'an, they each have their own agenda," Moore admits. "Meanstreak, for instance, is a dropout from Alchemax and a member of a video pirate group called the Videogoths. These are extensions of ideas I started when I wrote for *American Flagg!*, only now I can carry them even further."

The new X-Men won't lack for adventure, as Moore promises this group will get into at least as much trouble as their contemporary counterparts. "They're an activist group," he declares. "They don't wait around for things to happen. For example, Xi'an starts trying to find out what happened to mutantkind in the

"I see these guys as being inspired by today's X-Men instead of being *descended* from them," the writer notes.

--AND HE REALIZED HE WAS DRAWING THE POWER--
--CHARGING HIS BODY LIKE A MEGA-VOLT BATTERY.
WHEN HE FINALLY RELEASED THAT ENERGY, HE DESTROYED MOST OF HIS HOME--
--NOT THAT TIM ATTERED TIM KNEW HE COULD NO LONGER STAY THERE--
--FEARING HE'D END UP AS SOME BIO-SHOP GUINEA-PIG--HE LIVED ON THE STREET--
--CERTAIN HIS LIFE WAS OVER--AND THAT HIS FUTURE WAS GONE
TONIGHT, XI'AN GAVE HIM BACK THE POSSIBILITY OF A BETTER TOMORROW
AND HE CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE THAT FUTURE
NOOOO!

Much like Bishop before him, Tim Fitzgerald can absorb and redirect energy, but it cost him his job and his life as he knew it.

last 100 years, because we establish that there was an incident in their past called 'the Great Purge.' For a number of reasons, the mutant population was substantially cut. It might have been a deliberate genocide, a virus, or just that the 'super-mutations' of the '80s and '90s weren't passed along to the next generations, but there was definitely a time when things were really bad for mutants.

"They do follow something called the Mutant Underground Support Engine (MUSE), which was an 'underground railroad' for mutants during the bad times. On one hand, it'll be an exploration of what it is to be a mutant in 2099; on the other, we didn't create them just to leave them alone. They find that mutants have a heritage, a culture—they won't be treated as second-class citizens. They're going to take the world by storm."

Taking the world by storm sounds especially ironic, since in issue #5, some of the X-Men end up in New York City for the first *2099* crossover, *The Fall of the Hammer*, heralding the return of Thor and the Norse gods. "It sounds like a cliché, but the whole story *does* have repercussions in our books," Moore notes. "Meanstreak goes to find out what happened to a geneticist friend of his at Alchemax, and what happens to the Videogoths figures prominently in that story."

Moore says he has no problems with this first crossover story, but hopes that it doesn't become an ongoing event. "I don't think crossovers should be a yearly thing, because they've been overused. It's unfair to ask the readers of one book to read lots of others just to get the whole story."

Meanwhile, the future history of *2099* continues to unfold in new directions. Moore is glad that the *2099* "futureverse" is building its own vision, without being shackled to present continuity. "For every specific reference to something in the past, I'll probably give a reference that undermines or contradicts the first one," he says. "Because this book is edited by Joey Cavalieri and not Bob Harras, we're trying to keep clear of the modern *X-Men* continuity. From a creative

DON'T WORRY. THE CRYSTAL I'VE ENCASED YOU IN IS POROUS.
YOU WON'T SUFFOCATE
KRYSTALIN, YOU ARE MORE GENEROUS TO THESE THUGS THAN I WOULD BE
THEY INTENDED TO PUT OUR MUTANT BROTHER TO DEATH FOR AMUSEMENT
WE CAN ARGUE THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPASSION LATER, MEANSTREAK.
NOW WE NEED TO SEE BLOODWAVE TO SAFETY

All Art: Ron Lim/Adam Kubert/Colors: Tom Smith

"Krystalin is sort of a New Age 'earth mother,' " explains Moore, while Meanstreak is "the rogue of the group."

Although they're detached geographically, Moore admits there are some philosophical and psychological connections between his two *2099* titles. "There is some overlap," he says. "Xi'an and Doom share a similar kind of megalomania and purpose. But, outside of the *Hammer* storyline in *X-Men* #5, you won't see much crossover between *X-Men* and *Doom* per se. I prefer to use things like a throwaway line in *Doom* #8 that figures real big in an *X-Men* story—it isn't a big deal in *Doom*, but it helps establish that it really is the *same* world."

Moore definitely agrees that there can be too much of a good thing, though. "Could there be too many *X-Men* books? Yes! No question. But regardless of the quality of others' work, I prefer to play in my own

(continued on page 62)

standpoint, we're on stronger ground if we stand on our own. We don't want to rely on another title's popularity to sell ours. There are things I would like to use from today's stories, but they would only create problems. That doesn't mean we won't see references to the past. I'm interested in how history is written or events perceived in a historical context, as opposed to how they really happened."

Xi'an draws his inspiration from history to assemble this group, but Professor Charles Xavier isn't his only role model. "He calls this group of mutants the X-Men because of the things he knows about Xavier and Magnus, but in the first issue, he mentions two other characters who have never appeared in *X-Men* books. My assumption is that things happened between 1993 and 2099 that would have equal weight with today's events. I see these guys as being *inspired* by today's X-men instead of being descended from them," Moore says. "They aren't fifth-generation X-Men; they're not Wolverine's, Cyclops' or anybody's kids."

Moore states flatly that the modern X-Men will *not* make any guest appearances in *X-Men 2099*.

"*None* of them," he says. "*Not one.*

"I hope *X-Men 2099* stands on its own, but if it does, it owes a great deal to Joey as the editor. He has fought hard to make these books their own, and not let them be these market-driven knockoffs of Marvel's bestselling titles. I think that *Spider-Man 2099* really broke ground, because it wasn't what people expected, but the book is *really* good. Working with guys like that, it should be lots of fun to do the crossover."

™ & © Characters & Art: Trademark & Copyright 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group

They're battling the next stage of human animation.

□

By PAT JANKIEWICZ

They're eight feet tall, they're smarter than you, stronger than you, faster than you, and they're very surly so you'd better get along with them, because they're the Neosapiens—the genetically-perfect supermen who rule Future Earth on Universal's new animated series, *Exosquad*.

Jeff Segal, the show's creator, is also the president and founder of the Universal Cartoon Studio. In his plush office, he explains the series' genesis. "*Exosquad* came about because I'm *really* interested in the concept of genetic engineering, an interest predating *Jurassic Park*," he notes. "It began with the question of where we were going in the genetic sciences. You read reports that before the decade's end, they'll be able to regenerate human limbs and eyes. Through genetic manipulation, they'll be able to repair congenital defects in newborn babies.

"You wonder where this is going. It's like buying a car—'What if they put all the best features into one vehicle?'—in this case, *all* of these genetic advances—the elimination of genetic flaws, the ability to enhance intelligence, augmented senses, DNA regeneration therapy to extend human life. What if somebody manipulated the human genome to incorporate all these advances into *one* being? Would not that one being become the next stage of human evolution? Evolution takes its natural course over eons, but genetic engineering would be able to leapfrog the process.

"*Exosquad* began as a result of this interest: What would happen if genetic science created the next stage of human evolution? What if that next stage was created out of necessity? If terraforming is possible, Mars and Venus being the likely places it would occur, wouldn't an augmented human being be the logical life form to help terraform all those planets?"

Thus, a new breed of villain evolves. "The next stage of human evolution, Neosapiens, establish themselves on Venus or Mars, and are

deliberately imported, the way slave labor was imported to the new world, to do *specific* jobs. Because they're so evolved, genetically speaking, they're better than us in every way. They're more intelligent, they have photographic memories, they don't require sleep and they have absolutely infallible senses," Segal explains.

"Because they're reproduced through cloning, you don't have the doubt/indecision/element of chance that's involved in sexual reproduction. You can reproduce with absolute perfection each time, and maybe you would manipulate the gene pool for some random variation so that they wouldn't look exactly alike. If there's an advanced human group that's better than us in every way, what if out of that group, a charismatic leader arises and galvanizes this species and they take over?"

All Exosquad Art: Trademark & Copyright 1993 MCA TV

With a motto of "Who dare, win!" the Exosquad, including (from left to right) Alec, Maggie, J.T., Kaz and Marsala, as well as Sean and Nara (not shown), challenges the genetic mutant breed of Neosapiens.

Exosquad draws inspiration from the real-life horrors of history. "I modeled it after World War II," Segal reveals. "Adolph Hitler takes over Europe. The underground fights against Hitler. The allies fight to overthrow this vicious regime, and must rally all of their resources to do so. I've looked at what could have happened if Germany had been successful and tried to extrapolate that into a future scenario.

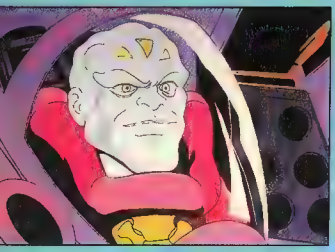
"The Neosapiens take over. Their charismatic leader, who believes that he has the ultimate vision of human destiny and he alone can lead us, is Phaeton. He's a villain, but he's not insane. The protocol is that the Neosapiens take Latin and Greek names for themselves, to distinguish themselves from more conventional human names. "Also, to distinguish the characters in the TV series, the Neosapiens will all speak with a slight British inflection," he explains. "For Americans, a British accent *always* implies intelligence. Historically in movies, the professor, the alien, the Romans in *Ben Hur*, all spoke with British accents. I think Americans admire an elegant British accent. We wanted something that made the Neosapiens sound automatically intelligent."

Lead by Phaeton (in front), the Neosapien regime includes (from left to right) Praetorius, Livanus, Draconis and Typhon. Shiva and Livia are also high-ranking members of the order.

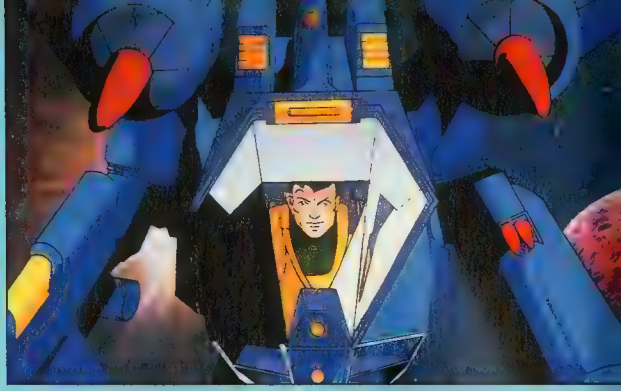
As for the heroes, "The Exosquad is a military organization that was created, but *not* intended to fight the Neosapiens. Here's a world 200 years in the future, where Earth lives in relative peace. Man has spread out into the solar system and set up mining operations on the moons of Jupiter. In order to populate these installations, before the Neosapiens were perfected, they sent out criminals and the dregs of society, the way that Australia was settled.

"There's a revolt by reprobates on a few of these large mining colonies. They take over the moons, become pirates and start ravaging Earthbound shipping. They organize themselves like Samurai clans, with their own leaders, logo and flag. Exosquad was originally formed to put down this rebellion, and to restore management to those industrial operations.

"At that point, nobody realized that there would be a war with the Neosapiens, or that the Neosapiens would take over. There was friction between natural humans and Neosapiens, with them wanting rights and humans,



Typhon is the commander of the Neosapien interplanetary forces. He's ruthless and cunning; his name strikes fear into the hearts of men.



EON Command relies on Marsh and his Exosquad, the best of the bunch.

being what we are, reluctant to grant them equality even though they're superior to us."

If it sounds like *Exosquad*'s a little deeper than most syndicated animated fare, it is. "This show is different on a number of levels, not the least of which is the complexity and level of storytelling involved," Segal announces. "I think we're seeing a genetic reality played out, the way Steven Spielberg called the ability to clone dinosaurs a 'genetic eventuality.' Manipulation of the human form *is* going to happen, and we play with that realistic issue."

Segal feels that the show's depth will be appreciated "because we don't believe in playing down to the [animated] *Batman/X-Men* audience. This is a smart group. If you look at the kids who are fans of *X-Men*, *Batman* and *Star Trek*, we're talking about a relatively enlightened, smart audience. Mindless action is *not* sufficient. They'll respond to a complex story that's fundamentally the battle between good and evil.

"First and foremost, I've been a rabid fan of the SF genre my entire life," Segal notes. "I've read all the major books, and many of the obscure ones. I've always written for this area. Prior to coming here as an executive, I was a writer/story editor and worked on a number of projects, [some] less illustrious than others, including *Go-Bots*," he smiles. "We tried to give that show *some* intelligence, and if you look at it now, it's a lot of fun and not stupid. It may *not* be a classic, but it's not stupid!"

The Florida-born Segal lived as a writer in Japan for three years, developing a so-far-unproduced live-action *Ultraman* feature and an animated Toei project called *Cyborg 009*. Back in the U.S., Segal was a writer and story editor at Hanna-Barbera, working on the studio's entire line. He wrote for *Scooby-Doo*, *Yogi* and *The Jetsons*.

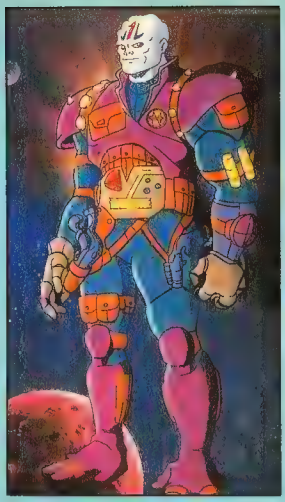
While there, he teamed with another cartoon crusader, Alan Burnett (now producer of the animated *Batman*, CS#29). "Alan and I were writing partners for many years. Alan did *The Smurfs*, and I did something else. Unfortunately," Segal jokes, "*The Smurfs* won the Humanitas Award, and whatever I was doing didn't! Alan deserved it, believe me."

Eventually, Universal CEO Sid Sheinberg offered Segal, then Hanna-Barbera's Senior VP, a new job. Segal was to be president and founder of MCA/Universal Family Entertainment and the Universal Cartoon Studio. "It was a great challenge, because MCA had no animation business; they did it randomly," Segal states. "They gave me an opportunity to literally start from scratch."

The *Exosquad*'s leader is "a guy named J.T. Marsh, a young man born in an orbital city of the future Earth called Ameron, orbiting North America. He wanted a life of adventure, so he joined the Exosquad to fight the pirates. We've tried to make J.T. anything but a 'whitebread' hero," the producer declares.

"We've tried to create symbiotic machinery with which an Exosquad trooper can merge," explains series creator Jeff Segal.

Design & Layout: Calvin Lee



Marsala turned against his upbringing, a crime punishable by death, and though the others may not trust him totally, this Neosapien is loyal to the Exosquad.

Hardware used by the genetic creations bears a resemblance to its operators.

"This is a guy who's a little bit tattered at the edges, and his background is *not Leave It to Beaver*. He has some foibles, and hopefully the audience will like him because of that. He becomes the squad's leader, so we essentially follow him and his squad in the series." Voice-over veteran Robby Benson—already *Prince Valiant* and the Beast in *Beauty & the Beast*—voices Marsh.

"Sean Napier is a former member of the Exosquad who didn't like being off-Earth and wanted to come home. He returned disillusioned with life as an Exosquad cadet, and became a member of the Chicago Police Force," Segal explains. "When the Neosapiens take over, he's on leave, or else he would have been rounded up and executed with all the other police.

"Napier becomes the leader of the resistance. He's very resourceful and lives in hiding on Earth, in Old Chicago [now known as "Phaeton City"]."

Not all the heroes are human. "Marsala is a Neosapien who left their cause. He felt that since Neosapiens are evolved humans, we should all live in peace. He left to join the Exosquad, and he's in J.T. Marsh's unit. The problem is that all the other members, being natural humans, look upon him with suspicion. He's a fish-out-of-water, and his point is to show that all Neosapiens aren't bad."

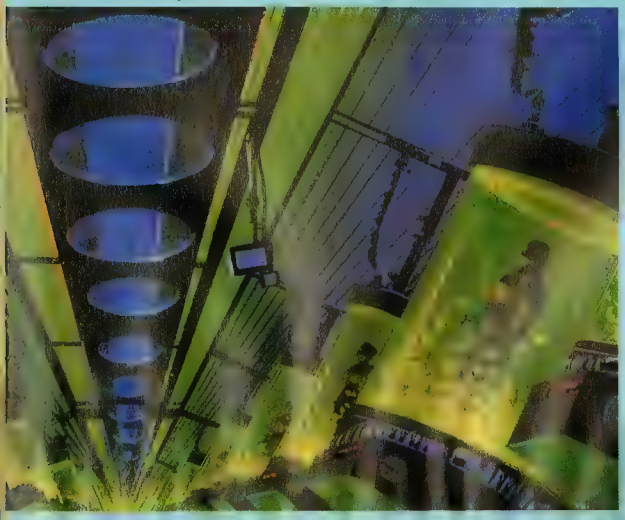
On the other hand, Segal points out, "The Neosapiens don't think of themselves as 'bad.' They aren't maniacs. Phaeton believes he has a manifest destiny, and that they have evolved from humans the way we evolved from lower life forms; Phaeton's not insane, just driven.

"His vision happens to be one we don't like, because he's suppressing humanity. The Neosapiens don't require sleep, they don't excrete waste, they don't have sex," Segal says with a grin. "Maybe that's why they're in such a bad mood!"

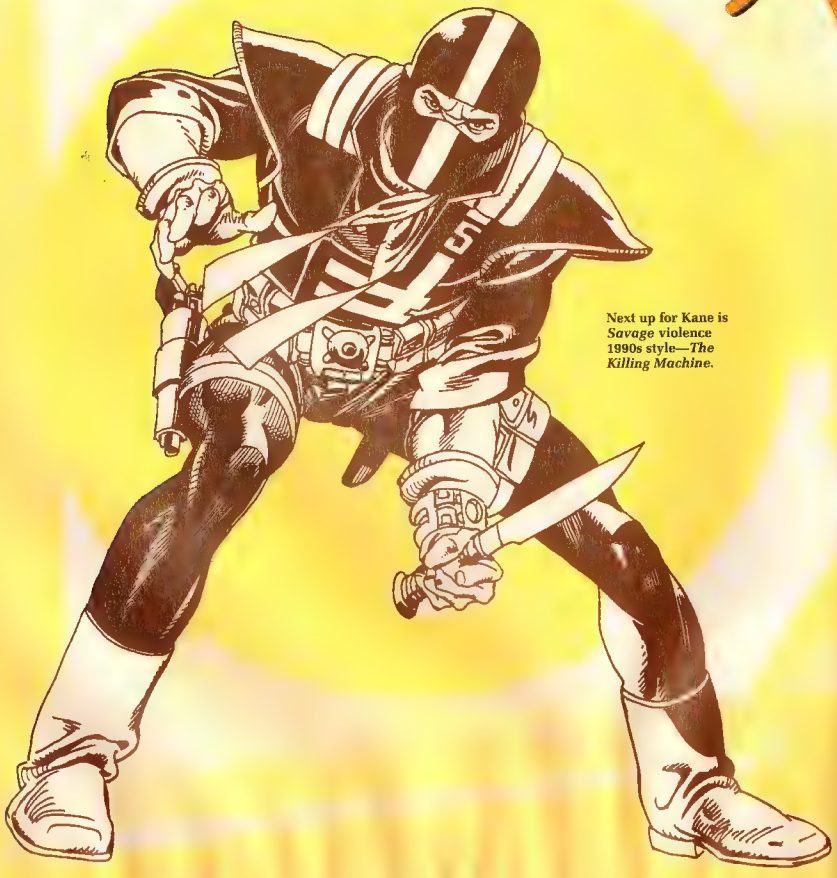
Other Neosapiens include [illegible] the cause's philosophies. [illegible]

(continued on page [illegible])

Neosapiens are grown, not born. Their creation was for human benefit, but the creatures eventually rebelled.



Dynamite in A



Next up for Kane is *Savage* violence 1990s style—*The Killing Machine.*

Killing Machine Character & Art: Copyright 1993 Gil Kane

ction

Conan: Copyright 1981 Conan Properties Inc.

In the industry longer than many newer pros have been alive, Gil Kane continues to draw adventure into comic book lives.

Photo: Alex Chun

After a half-century of drawing comics, Gil Kane is still sharpening his competitive edge.

By DARCY SULLIVAN

Design & Layout: Calvin Lee

With a name like *Killing Machine*, you expect violence from DC's upcoming mini-series. Violence you get. You expect savagery, the kind that surges through today's bestselling comics. Savagery you get. You expect a lava-hot young artist, a kid who'll sign with Image before his 30th birthday, a whelp who worships Todd McFarlane and thinks Hal Foster is a character on *Herman's Head*.

This you *don't* get. The creator, penciller, writer and inker of *Killing Machine* is a rather refined gentleman named Gil Kane, who is older than Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld put together. Known as one of comics' philosopher kings, Kane reveres a classic coterie of artists whose influence has faded from the industry. He's a passionate reader of everything from pulp fiction to social history, a man who once drew on George Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman* for the exploits of a toy spin-off comic character called *Captain Action*.

Kane has brought a rare intelligence to comics for some 50 years, but there's nothing quaint about his work. During the late 1960s and early '70s, his action

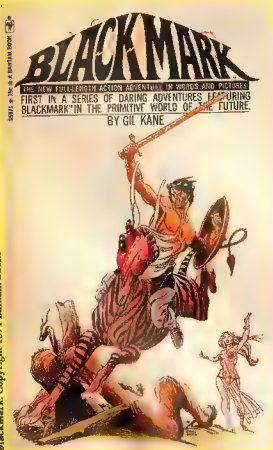
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
25¢ 14 MAR 02161
JUNGLE ACTION FEATURING:
THE BLACK PANTHER
THERE ARE SERPENTS IN PARADISE
SEE TCHAKA'S BATTLE AS HE NEVER BEFORE AGAINST THE DEMONITES FROM BEHIND TIME!

All Art: Gil Kane

"The moment I had the concept, I knew I had one of the best covers I had done in my life," Kane says of *Jungle Action* #14.

Jurassic Park Art: Gil Kane/George Perez/Trademark & Copyright 1993 Universal Pictures & Amblin Entertainment/Courtesy Topps

Kane's dinosaur experience made him a choice penciller for *Jurassic Park*.


BLACKMARK
THE NEW FULL-LENGTH ACTION ADVENTURE IN WORDS AND PICTURES!
FIRST IN A SERIES OF DARING ADVENTURES FEATURING BLACKMARK" IN THE PRIMITIVE WORLD OF THE FUTURE.
BY GIL KANE

Blackmark: Copyright 1971 Bantam Books

A pioneering ancestor to today's graphic novel, Kane's *Blackmark* marked an achievement in selling a comics idea to a major publisher, Bantam Books.

scenes were second in intensity only to Jack Kirby's. His explosive work influenced the next wave of artists like Frank Miller and John Byrne, and refracted through their work to virtually every superhero superstar you could name.

Today, Kane is virtually the sole Silver Ager still doing vital work, from a *Legends of the Dark Knight* series in 1992 to this summer's *Jurassic Park* comics adaptation. "John Buscema has left the field," Kane notes, adding wryly, "I don't see Curt Swan doing much anymore."

Comics, Kane knows, never look back. While the veteran artist, now in his mid-60s, can deliver an informed paean to the virtues of seminal comic-strip artists like Alex Raymond and Milton Caniff, he can also tell you what Malibu's cut was on the Image books. And he's damned if he'll settle into the easy chair of nostalgia.

"I worry about having that competitive edge," he says. "Many of these new guys are dynamic as hell. I'm working hard, trying to improve my design and drawing—not only to be competitive, but to move forward."

Two current projects are testing Kane's "competitive edge": *Jurassic Park* and *Killing Machine*. The former, as everyone knows by now, is Steven Spielberg's summer blockbuster, which Topps adapted in four issues. Kane himself structured the comic series, working from the screenplay, not the film (none of which he saw while laying out or pencilling the book).

Movie adaptations in comics are often slapdash affairs, Topps' own *Bram Stoker's Dracula* being a recent exception. *Jurassic Park* is also an exception, thanks to its creative team: penciller Kane, inker George Perez and writer Walt Simonson.

One of the bonuses in getting Kane to draw the series, says Topps Comics editor Jim Salicrup (CS #30), is that the artist is a past master of the dinosaur. "To Gil, there's no difference between drawing a dinosaur and drawing a real-life animal," says Salicrup. "He's animating them, in a sense—we can ask for a dinosaur from any angle and he can do it."

Dinosaurs crop up all through Kane's career, and bring out his best. "One of the favorite covers I've done had the Black Panther holding open the jaw of a tyrannosaur," says Kane, referring to *Jungle Action* #14. "The moment I had the concept, I knew I

had one of the *best* covers I had done in my life."

Kane clearly couldn't resist tackling *Tyrannosaurus rex* and company again. "*Jurassic Park* is really the first pencils-only job I've done in years," he says. Given his druthers, the artist would rather ink his work and write it too.

He'll be doing both for *Killing Machine*, slated for 1994 release. This series allows Kane to explore what it would be like to be a "superhero" who's afraid of his own viciousness. It is, to be sure, a shade darker than *Jurassic Park*.

In the story, Adam Cross is a cybernetically enhanced "human defense system" who's more than a simple super-soldier. "He's superior to the culture in *every* way, and because of that he becomes a victim, not a hero," says Kane. "He's part machine, and his reflexes make him defend himself against any threat. When the government sends him on an assignment and he sees the result, he finds himself revolted by his own lethalness. He realizes he's no longer human in that regard. He abandons the government, and it pursues him. He wants to exist as something other than a superhero, and he tries to lose himself in menial work. He wants to live a peaceful life, but he fails."

Savage Art: Copyright 1968 Adventure House Press Inc.

***His Name is...Savage* brought a new brand of violence to comics in 1967.**

To Kane, the heart of the story is the character's attempt to reconcile himself with "a world he never made," to use the jargon. "To me, *Frankenstein* is a superhero story," Kane declares. "It does essentially what I want to do—it

"I'm working hard," Kane notes, "trying to improve my design and drawing."

The famous Spider-Man drug issues are Kane's, but his name is mostly missing from the Marvel history books.

BUT, THOUGH HE COVERS THE CITY WITH DIZZYING SPEED, HOUR AFTER HOUR--
--'TIS NO USE--
"THERE'S NO TRACE OF HIM."
IT'LL SOON BE DAWN--SO I'D BETTER GET BACK!
BUT THE SUSPENSE IS DRIVING ME UP THE WALL--
MAYBE THAT'S WHAT THE GOBLIN WANTS
HARRY'S SURE TO BE ASLEEP BY NOW. DON'T WANT HIM TO KNOW I WAS OUT ALL NIGHT--
BUT PETER PARKER IS THIS VERY LAST THING ON HARRY'S MIND--
I--NEVER FELT THIS WAY--BEFORE!
"IT'S LIKE--I'M DROWNING--FALLING--DYING INSIDE! NOTHING SEEMS REAL--NOTHING HANGS TOGETHER--"
"HE PULLS IT--MUST BE--THE PILLS--"
THEY'RE DRIVING ME--OUT OF MY MIND!
HARRY!
SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH HIM--SOMETHING HAPPENED!
I--NEVER SHOULD HAVE GONE--AND LEFT HIM ALONE!

Art: Kane/Frank Giacoia

All Spider-Man, Black Panther, Warlock, Master of Kung Fu, X-Men, Beast & Related Characters & Art. Trademark & Copyright 1972, 1974, 1975, 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group

puts this fantastic creation in our world and forces him to exist in it." *Killing Machine* will ask: Can society withstand the superhuman being? "The institutions are afraid of him because he threatens their control," Kane says. "But institutions only exist to be overthrown."

Ideas like these filtered through books like Kane and Roy Thomas' *Warlock* in the early '70s. But superheroes have changed since then, and Kane has kept track. "The thing that's contemporary in superheroes is the quality of excess," he says. "We're living through a period of street culture. *Killing Machine* deals with excess,

Still on his back today, Green Lantern's costume is a Kane design.

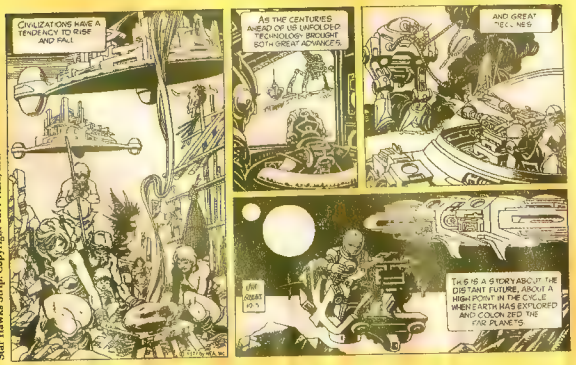
Kane has covered just about every hero on the block, including a certain Kryptonian.

All Green Lantern, Atom, Batman, Superman & Related Characters & Art: Trademark & Copyright 1959, 1963, 1981, 1993 DC Comics Inc.

slaughter, bloodletting. It's a product of its time."

"*Killing Machine* is a gritty, hard-edged book for today's audience," says series editor Archie Goodwin. "But it also has the kind of psychological underpinnings that Gil has always been drawn to. Gil's still at the top of his game, and *Killing Machine* proves it."

In the '70s, the artist created the *Star Hawks* strip with SF writer Ron Goulart.


CIVILIZATIONS HAVE A TENDENCY TO RISE AND FALL
AS THE CENTURIES AHEAD OF US UNFOLDED TECHNOLOGY BROUGHT BOTH GREAT ADVANCES
AND GREAT REGRESSES
THIS IS A STORY ABOUT THE DISTANT FUTURE, ABOUT A HIGH POINT IN THE CYCLE WHEN EARTH HAS EXPLORED AND COLONIZED THE NINE PLANETS

Star Hawks Strip: Copyright 1977 NEA, Inc.

Ultraviolence may be *the* trend for today's superheroes, but it's nothing new to Kane. In 1967, he created a magazine-sized comic called *His Name Is...Savage!* Even 15 years later, when it was reprinted by Fantagraphics, the book's sadistic hero made Wolverine look like Aunt May.

The captions, penned by Goodwin, were wince-inducing stuff: We read about "Savage pounding and clawing the President's face into pulpy, hideous ruin." The pictures offered no relief—in one infamous scene, Savage forces a gun into a man's mouth and we see the broken teeth fly. If Frank

Miller and Geof Darrow's *Hard Boiled* had a launching point, this was it.

"Because of the book's violent nature, I used a pseudonym, and it's about the only time I have," says Goodwin. "I was working at Marvel at the time, and I didn't want someone picking up *Savage* and then writing to Marvel to say, 'You let the man who wrote this awful, violent thing work for you?' "

To say *Savage* was shocking in 1967 is an understatement. There were no Terminators or Judge Dredds then, no adult comics; even underground comix were a ways off. But the only uproar took place behind the scenes: Kane says the people behind the Comics Code Authority hobbled the book.

"It was a protectionist association," he says. "They didn't let anyone in, and they tried to keep anyone outside of the association from publishing comics. They called my first printer, Sparta, and said I was printing some kind of pornography. They scared off the second one too."

Kane did find a printer, but says that the Code enforcers ultimately interfered with the title's distribution. "We printed 200,000 copies, and only 20,000 made it to the stands," Kane says. The noble experiment failed, and *Killing Machine* seems like Kane's belated revenge. "I don't know if *Killing Machine* crosses over the line the way *Savage* did," says Goodwin. "But then, the line is much further over than it was in 1967. If *Savage* had been published in today's comics market, it would have been a big success."

His history of pushing the action envelope has prepared Kane for today's market better than most Silver Agers. "On a general level, I feel the art in comics right now is the best ever done," Kane says. "I feel the everyday work you see is infinitely better than in the past—the pages are dynamic and beautifully designed. On a specific level, though, I don't see any one person as important and influential as Jack Kirby or Alex Toth were in their day—except Moebius [the European artist also known as Jean Giraud], who has very little influence in the U.S."

Kane has only caveats, not condemnation, for his heirs to the comic kingdom. The first: Don't bury the story. While Kane admits that his explorations helped popularize the action-driven page layout—he shattered the traditional square panels into triangular shards—he has always put the story first.

"I use dynamic panels, but not on every page," he says. "In today's books, each page is composed to exist on its own, not in any continuity with the others—it's a gigantic figure, a big action scene, two or three panels. Artists do this because the pages are worth more in resale. But the result is that the story has to fight the drawing for space."

HELLO, BEAUTIFUL WARBLER!
IF ONLY I COULD UNDERSTAND YOUR SONG...
THE WHEEST THE BEST
BUT I CANNOT
THEN LISTEN, INSTEAD, TO MY HUNTING-HORN.
AN' DRINK S CAME FOR--
--NOW FOOD I FIND, AS WELL!
HAROOOOOOOO
MAN! MY HORN S NOTE HAS ALLURED SOMETHING LOVELY
WHAT A JOLLY COMPANION YOU WOULD MAKE!

King Art: Gil Kane/Colors: Jim Woodring/Copyright 1991 DC Comics Inc.

The artist produced *The Ring of the Nibelung* with Roy Thomas at DC, after severing ties with Marvel.

Warning number two is aimed more at publishers and editors: "The publishers have converted the entire field to a single approach, the excessive, exciting style that defines the superhero right now. That style is the perfect reflection of the late '80s and early '90s, but it's eating its own tail. There's *no* variety, *no* diversity in the field. The big publishers aren't introducing any new concepts or genres that could become popular, like DC did in *Showcase* in the 1950s and '60s, and the alternative publishers don't sell enough books to have an impact.

"We have to face the big day when the superhero begins to falter. If that happens, I don't see how the industry as it stands will survive. People are going to be tap-dancing on building ledges."

Why is Kane drawing killer cyborgs and dinosaurs rather than a pension? The answer vibrates through his career: craft. The guy still wants to draw better.

"My romance with comics has less

The Marks of Kane

Kane describes his style as "a contrast and harmony between forms."

His style is specific and unique, but Kane himself didn't think so in the beginning.

When I first started working for Marvel, John Romita remarked on my style," says Gil Kane. "That surprised me. I thought I had a rather generic style."

Generic? Even 26 years ago, Kane's gyrating figures and zigzagging designs stood out. On close study, his compositions reveal what the artist describes as "a contrast and harmony between forms," a push-and-pull effect that gives the drawing life and also guides the reader's eye around the page. But you don't need a design degree to spot many of Kane's stylistic flourishes, which can break through even the muddiest inks. Here are just a few:

The Nostril Shot. "I used to do nostril shots all the time, with the head thrust back. I tried to get a 3-D effect. The heads were harder to draw that way, so I was testing myself, but it also kept me from using a flat shape. All the heads and figures were either tipped forward or back."

The Articulated Hands. "That's Bridgeman [George Bridgeman, the noted anatomy teacher Kane constantly studies]. I've worked hard at the hands, and I'm still not where I would like to be with them." (How influential are Kane's hands? Check out Spawn's sometime.)

The Flowing Hair. "That's the lyricism I'm trying for. The most beautiful hair ever drawn was by Lou Fine. His hair textures were absolutely unbelievable. You could get emotionally involved with the way he did hair."

The Swan Dive. "I started this on *Green Lantern*, to get away from characters who looked like they were running through the air rather than flying. I wanted the figure to leap out of the page, like he was doing a swan dive. I was always interested in the look of gymnastics, and was quite an athlete as a kid."

—Darcy Sullivan

Conan Characters & Art: Trademark & Copyright 1975 Marvel Comics Group

to do with the subject matter than with the craft of drawing and design," says Kane. "Anyone who really loves comics will get to do it, because it doesn't require genius. It requires intelligence and persistence, which leads you to craft."

Craft sounds so antiquated today, it barely seems to describe the electricity of Kane's work. He began in 1942, just 16 years old, in the studio of Joe Simon and Jack Kirby, the latter of whom Kane considers one of comics' all-time greats. Kane (born Eli Katz) drew from a host of classic artists, but was most heavily influenced by Kirby's powerhouse visions and by the more lyrical work of artist Lou Fine. His goal, he says, "was to combine lyricism or grace with power and strength."

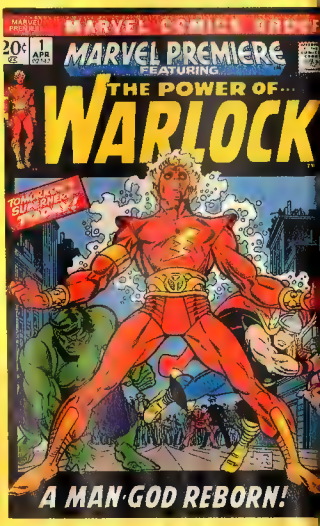
Despite the early stint with Kirby, Kane was known for his rather aesthetic heroes at first. Picked by editor Julius Schwartz to draw the revived '40s hero Green Lantern, Kane designed the ring-bearer's green-and-black costume, a sleek affair with a turtleneck-like collar. The classy costume clicked, and so did GL himself, one of many DC characters Kane drew from 1959-1970.

Long-limbed and lean, his hair swirling in an elegant pompadour, Hal Jordan was a regular smoothie compared to the ferocious brawlers that Kirby stuffed onto Marvel's pages. The DC hierarchy preferred a quieter style, with fisticuffs kept to a tasteful minimum. In *The Green Lantern Archives*, Kane writes, "How to extend the physical action and not raise Julie's blood pressure became my job for the immediate future."

Unfortunately, the inkers cramped Kane's style. "I always felt I had incompetent inking at DC," he remembers. "What I was doing was being put aside by a person who couldn't draw, or one who could draw but was totally out of sympathy with my work." Two exceptions were Frank Giacoia and Kane himself, who showed what his style was really made of on covers he self-inked.

DC's comics were a bit too gentle for Kane, and all that pent-up energy had to go somewhere. In 1967, he struck out with *His Name Is...Savage!*, followed by 1970's *Blackmark*. *Blackmark* was another breakthrough, a graphic novel printed in the size of a standard paperback (the comic-book trade paperback was still years away). As with *Savage*, Kane concentrated on the prose as well as the pictures, add-

Adam Warlock is a good example of Kane's great study of human anatomy.



For a time, Kane was Marvel's house cover artist, creating stunning and exciting visual feasts.

ing lengthier captions in an attempt to boost the power of the imagery. Both books were radical innovations, relegated to historical footnotes because they just didn't sell.

"One thing Gil never gets credit for," says Goodwin, "is that with *Savage* and *Blackmark*, he pioneered the graphic novel in America. With *Blackmark*, he was able to sell an original comics project to a prestigious publisher like Bantam Books. I don't know who else could have done that at that time." When the first installment fizzled saleswise, Bantam axed plans for a *Blackmark* series. (Marvel reprinted *Blackmark* in a magazine format in the 1970s.)

Kane was too busy to dwell on any one project's financial failure. By the late 1960s, he was working for DC, Tower (*T.H.UN.D.E.R. Agents*) and Marvel. It was at Marvel that Kane's style tipped toward his former mentor, partly because at Marvel, Kirby's style ruled. "I had curbed certain dynamic tendencies in my work, and the guy who helped me release them was Stan Lee," says Kane. "Stan had a good eye. I must admit that. He felt my figures had too much of the lyric dancer, that they looked like they should be played by David Niven or Douglas Fairbanks. Jack's characters at the time all had legs like mastodons, and Stan wanted more of that from me."

Freed—if not pushed—to be as Kirby-like as possible, Kane brought a boldness to his pages that none but Kirby could best. "When I was doing *Captain Marvel* and *The Amazing Spider-Man*, I started to feel an authority I never felt at DC," Kane says. "When I did my early Captain America and Hulk stories [for *Tales of Suspense* and *Tales to Astonish*, respectively], I was still in the DC style. With Captain Marvel, I was in my own style."

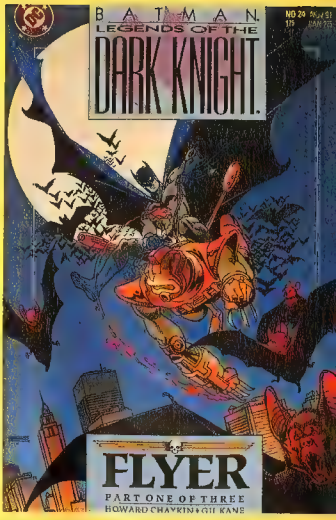
And what a style it was. DC had frowned on long fight scenes; at Marvel, *every* scene was a fight scene, and Kane reveled in them. He pencilled "just about every strip at one time or another, except *Fantastic Four*." He quickly became Marvel's house cover artist, doing (by his count) nearly 1,000 covers for the company, mostly in the 1970s (the recent two-volume *Photo-Journal Guide to Marvel Comics* is full of them). Ever the craftsman, Kane threw his all into the iffiest projects. Some of his most memorable work appeared on covers for less-than-memorable books like *The Ringo Kid* (Western reprints), *Chamber of Chills* (horror reprints) and *Astonishing Tales Featuring It! The Living Colossus* (don't ask).

"Gil has an excellent sense of design; he did some great, dramatic covers," says Roy Thomas, Marvel's premier editor during that period, who collaborated with Kane on numerous projects. Adds Goodwin, "His ability to compose within a panel and within a page is phenomenal."

"The whole point of composition and design is to bring your eye to the most important element in the picture," Kane says. "Everything else has to support what's most important, either by being in harmony or by being in contradiction. In a bad design, everything is unrelated—it floats free and in conflict."

In the 1970s, Kane found that happy medium between Fine and Kirby, and his choreographed punches and dynamic stances became industry benchmarks. "I wanted to make my characters as virile as possible, but also graceful," he says. "I tried to get them to punch like trapeze artists." While Kirby's figures increasingly defied human anatomy, Kane relentlessly studied the body, its skeletal structure, its musculature. He restructured the body into taut, nearly geometric shapes—stylized, idealized, perfect. His figures were more than powerful, they were beautiful.

No character fits this description better than Adam Warlock. Kirby and Lee had created him (as "Him") in *Fantastic Four*, but Thomas and Kane remolded him into a long-tressed sun god, a combination holy king and dream date. Thomas calls him "our version of a Jesus Christ superhero." Adam Warlock, who became a cult hit under Jim Starlin, is now one of Marvel's mainstays.



After a stint in animation, Kane returned to comics and worked on *Legends of the Dark Knight* with writer Howard Chaykin.

Kane's artistic restlessness continued to take him in new directions. For more than four years, he collaborated with SF author Ron Goulart on a newspaper strip, *Star Hawks*, and also worked on the daily *Tarzan* strip for awhile. The early 1980s found Kane back at DC, where he feels he hit new peaks on issues of *Action Comics* and *Sword of the Atom*, a revival of the crumb-sized crimefighter he had handled in the '60s.

The closest Kane has come to comic book retirement was during the mid-80s, when, following a move from Connecticut to California, he began working in animation. He designed characters for shows as diverse as *Superman*, *G.I. Joe* and *Police Academy*, and enjoyed a new prosperity toiling for Ruby Spears, Hanna-Barbera and Marvel.

Says Kane now, "The best thing about animation is the money—I made twice the highest yearly income I had made in comic books. The worst thing is that you are a picket in a picket fence. Once you develop a concept, other people carry it on to another stage, and *nothing* ever emerges the way you did it. No matter how much of a hotshot you think you are, you're a rather obscure person in the scheme of things."

With the market's late '80s resurgence, Kane wanted back into comics,

(continued on page 58)

MEET MR. FANTASTIC

This comics movie role is really a stretch for Alex Hyde-White.

Selected Photos Courtesy Alex Hyde-White

By MARC SHAPIRO

The acclaimed British actor Wilfrid Hyde-White, known to mainstream moviegoers for *My Fair Lady* and to SF fans as Dr. Goodfellow on *Buck Rogers*, was always big on the technique of acting. Consequently, the late actor's offspring, actor Alex Hyde-White, feels that if there is a Heaven, and his father is looking down on his turn as Mr. Fantastic Reed Richards in the film adaptation of *The Fantastic Four*, he might offer the following bit of advice.

"He would probably say something like, 'When you act, don't put your hands in your pockets,' " Hyde-White chuckles. "But, just look at this costume! Even if I wanted to put my hands in my pockets, there are *no* pockets to put them in."

Hyde-White has a low-key sense of humor, not too far from his father's British roots, that finds laughs and self-deprecating moments in the oddest places. Having just stepped out of a hot spacesuit, and a spaceship set where the temperature reached 100 degrees or more, he announces, "Actors often joke that we don't work for a living. But we think it's not work, because we're crazy." And no, he isn't finished having fun at the expense of his spandex *Fantastic Four* outfit.

"I was very relieved that the costume *fit*. There's an old saying in the theater that, whenever you wear leotards, you have to make sure you don't have baggy knees, because that's all people will notice. Well, I knew this film would work that first day when I put on this costume and the knees *weren't* baggy."

But the actor, turning serious, also knew that Reed Richards was more than the usual comics role. Familiar only with the earlier animated series, he took a long look at the comics and the character created more than 30 years ago by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby.

"Reaching the acting conclusions that have to be reached about Reed isn't easy," he explains. "Anybody who's familiar with the complexity of the Marvel Universe knows that. Playing this character has definitely taken a lot of work. Reed easily has the deepest character arc, and it's to the credit of the script and the story that he has been given a pretty deep way of doing things. I didn't want to short-change him."

"We've taken many pains to keep the characters, and especially Reed, true to the comic book," Hyde-White says.

Art: Jack Kirby

Fantastic Four Characters: Trademark & Copyright 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group

All Fantastic Four Photos Courtesy Concorde Pictures

Design & Layout: Calvin Lee

Mr. Fantastic (Alex Hyde-White) and the Human Torch (Jay Underwood) confront the evil of Dr. Doom (Joseph Culp).

Hyde-White is confident that, through the action sequences, the encounters with the sinister Dr. Doom and his relationship with the FF's other members, fans will see the Reed Richards they've known for decades.

"There are always compromises that are made in a production like this one," he concedes, "but we've taken many pains to keep the characters, and especially Reed, true to the comic book. Reed has his inner struggles, and I believe the film makes an interesting correlation between his stretching powers and his inner conflicts of stretching himself too thin in order to please everybody.

"Most of the story in this film is basically the set-up. It's only in the film's last third that we actually become The Fantastic Four. I truly believe that the most challenging moments for us, collectively, come in the first few moments after the transition. You have this group of characters going along with their lives, and suddenly something major happens to them. How the actors respond in those first few moments after the transition is what defines how credible we are as characters, and how important the event that just happened to them *really* is.

"Consequently, for myself, the first time Reed stretches was the most important and challenging moment in this movie. It had to be more important than anything else in his life, and I had to get that point across to the audience or the scene's impact would have been lost."

Flanked by the faces of good and evil, Hyde-White eagerly promotes the film. "What it comes down to is the script and the director, both of which are quite good."

Photo: Maureen McTigue

The actor is a bit bemused and befuddled as he attempts to explain the special FX secrets of his stretching powers.

"Technically, it's a three-part process. I move my arm in a conventional manner, they cut in a hydraulic arm that shoots out about six feet, and then they add the computer optical thing that allows them to do whatever they want. I don't really understand *any* of this stuff, but then it's all I can do to

Before the transitions, Reed (Hyde-White) and Dr. Doom (Culp) are student and mentor. Their changes push them to opposing sides.

keep my address book straight.

"Much of it has boiled down to timing, and learning what I have to do with my real arm that will complement the FX. It has been a slow process, but I've basically gotten used to it, and I believe the mixture of live shots and FX will cut together real well."

Hyde-White applauds the casting of *The Fantastic Four*, which, he says, "has brought together a nice mixture of newer faces and veteran actors who bring a lot of experience to this film." He offers, half-joking, half-seriously, that doing *The Fantastic Four* on the cheap and under the Roger Corman banner holds no embarrassment for him.

"There isn't the stigma of doing a Concorde film that many people would have you believe. I'm certainly not cringing at doing a Corman movie. Hell no! You're nobody in Hollywood unless you've worked for Roger Corman at least twice. I've never been one to care about the studio or finances. What it comes down to is the script and the director, both of which, in this case, are quite good."

From an actor's point-of-view, he has found several aspects of *The Fantastic Four* particularly fascinating.

"One of the first scenes we shot was the wedding between Reed and Susan. That was interesting in that, by shooting one of the last scenes first, both Rebecca Staab [who plays Susan] and I were able to build on the relationship and courtship that would ultimately end up in this happy ending."

He also relates as to how his experience "doing big parts in small movies" came into play during a major plot point involving a lab scene. "Having been through this kind of thing before lent itself to a sort of unstated leadership role on my part, which was essentially the role Reed has in the film. According to the script, it was important for Johnny and Susan to appear to be hanging on every word I said. Now, for the character, that was appropriate, but the actor in me was instinctively wanting them to be individual and strike out on their own. It was a strange feeling."

ding the film with what's really the beginning leaves an opening for sequels. The actor has no problem with that: "I would love to play Reed Richards again."

Almost getting his hair burned off was a *highlight* when heroic Hyde-White fought *The Phantom of the Opera* (Robert Englund).

Phantom Photo. Copyright 1988 21st Century Film Corp.

Alex Hyde-White studied drama at both Georgetown University and the Actor's Center in London. He appeared in several stage productions, here and abroad, before coming to Hollywood in 1978, where he became a contract player at Universal, the same studio where his father (interviewed in STARLOG #47) would do *Buck Rogers* just two years later. He guested on such TV shows as *Hill Street Blues*, *Quincy* and *Battlestar Galactica* ("The Gun on Ice Planet Zero").

"That was my *first* Hollywood role. That got me started," he recalls fondly. "They would load us up into these orange crates on wheels and move us around in front of a blue screen. What viewers would end up seeing was the actors inside these state-of-the-art fighter aircraft that were added in post-production.

"I learned one important thing on that show. When the script indicated your dialogue as voice-over, *don't* believe it. I did, and so when we were shooting a scene in which I was flying, the camera rolled and I just sat there, flying the aircraft and not saying anything. Suddenly, it got real quiet on the set and I heard this voice off-camera saying, 'Kid, you've got some lines,' " he laughs.

High in the actor's memory list is his appearance in the pre-credits sequence of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* in which, as a younger Henry Jones, the only thing required was the *back* of his head.

"That, and a Scottish accent," chuckles Hyde-White. "It was easily the *hardest* audition that I've ever had. It was an important sequence, and they couldn't use just anybody, so I had to go through two video tests just to see if the back of my head was right for the part.

"On the day we shot the scene, they had this whole sound thing rigged up. River Phoenix would come in, say his lines, they would record it and then play back Sean Connery's voice. Steven Spielberg didn't want to use Connery's voice, but he had to protect himself. River and I talked it out and, when Spielberg called for rehearsal, we played the scene and I said the line, 'Junior, count to 20.' Spielberg turned to the soundman and said, 'Put the playback away. He sounds just like Sean Connery. Let's shoot it.' "

The actor's memories of working in *Biggles: Adventures in Time*, in which he plays a WW1 Sopwith Camel pilot, are limited to the fact "that it was my first lead in a motion picture" and that "it was great working with Peter Cushing.

"We sort of saved the world in that movie," he elaborates. "It wasn't a huge film, but many people seem to know about it and, in some circles, it has become a bit of a cult classic."

The highlight for the actor in *The Phantom of the Opera* (starring Robert Englund) in which he plays turn-of-the-century English theater patron Richard, was "working in Budapest and having to yell 'Christine' 25 times.

"Of course, there was my death scene at the end, where I almost had my hair burned off. That's the one drawback when you're working with a foreign crew. You don't understand when somebody is yelling, 'Look out, you're standing too close to the fire.' "

Time Trackers, the time-travel tale of a cop and evil genius who stumble into Medieval England, gave Hyde-White the opportunity to serve as fight director and "to wear long hair, and basically play out the whole Arthurian legend."

The actor is shocked that anybody remembers his very small role in *Captain America II*, a TV movie pilot (1979) in which Cap (Reb Brown) battled the evil Christopher Lee.

"Get out of here!" he howls. "That was such a small part and so long ago, I didn't think *anybody* would remember. I was just this guy walking down the streets of Portland, who gets covered up with poison snow. It was nothing, just this funny little bit. But, now that I think about it, that was actually my first role in a Marvel comic movie. I *hope* it's considered a growth thing to go from a small part in *Captain America* to the lead in *The Fantastic Four*," he laughs.

Genre credits hold no stigma for Hyde-White, who notes, "The fantasy and comic-book stuff tends to be a bit more flexible than other types of films."

Hyde-White feels that his long list of genre credits has been "just the luck of the draw," but he does find great enjoyment in playing SF and comics heroes.

"The fantasy and comic-book stuff tends to be a bit more flexible than other types of films. In many roles, you basically have to conform to a specific way a character should be played. But, what I've found with things like *The Fantastic Four* is that there's invariably more room as an actor to move and improvise, and take the part to places even the script doesn't indicate."

In Reed Richards, Hyde-White feels he has found that kind of character.

"Reed's a real friendly character to me. I've really enjoyed playing him. Normally, it takes me a week of playing a character to figure out *how* the parts fit. But, for the first time, I felt an immediate connection with this character on the first day of filming. I felt Reed could be a part that's very close to me."

The actor has no problem with the idea of stretching out as Mr. Fantastic in any possible *Fantastic Four* sequels.

"I would be happy to play Reed Richards again," Alex Hyde-White states. "In fact, I would be pretty pissed off if they asked somebody else to play him."

LIGHT & DARQUE

In his second life, Dr. Mirage opposes the evil in the Valiant Universe.

By KIM HOWARD JOHNSON

For every evil, there is a good, for every negative, a positive. And, for Master Darque, there's now Dr. Mirage.

The newest hero in Valiant's line debuts in *The Second Life of Dr. Mirage*, a life that sees the newly-powered doctor do battle with the nastiest evil in the Valiant Universe. Although created by veteran scripter Bob Layton, Dr. Mirage is being pencilled by hot newcomer Bernard Chang, who says the book's star is a rather reluctant hero. "He doesn't start out as a typical superhero," says Chang. "His wife Carmen would be a better candidate for super-powers. She's a very strong-willed person."

Chang says that Dr. Mirage learns to use his powers after his confrontation with Master Darque in the first two issues, and so begins his second life as Dr. Mirage, mystical hero.

"In his first life, he's a normal person, a parapsychologist who studies the dead," Chang explains. "He comes across Hook and Welt, two characters in *Eternal Warrior* #9 and #10 who were controlled by Master Darque, who had them hunting for the Book of Geomancers. They were killed in those issues, but they're back in *Dr. Mirage* #1! Their bodies are at the morgue, and Dr. Mirage is called in, because the bodies still contain energy. Dr. Mirage and Carmen begin to examine them. When they start testing tissue samples, Master Darque suddenly becomes aware that Mirage is tampering with his stuff.

Design & Layout: Jim McLernon

Photo: Laurie Brodach

Balancing college and career, Bernard Chang is delighted to be part of the Valiant Universe. He has a three-year contract.

"That sets up the first confrontation between Dr. Mirage and Master Darque. For all of his life, Dr. Mirage has been looking for the supernatural, the mystical and voodoo areas that Master Darque deals with. Now that Dr. Mirage has found a link to it, he and his wife go off in search of Master Darque, hoping to find answers."

The Second Life of Dr. Mirage sees Mirage develop as the good counterpart of the evil Master Darque, and the series will explore the opposing forces as personified in the two men. "In life, there's always a good and bad side. Whenever there's a positive, there's always a negative, whenever there's a negative, there's always a positive side," explains Chang. "Dr. Mirage becomes the positive side to fight against Master Darque's evils. At the beginning, he's not able to manipulate or use his powers to their full extent, because there's no school you can go to in order to learn to use your superpowers.

"He obtains his powers because of his strong love for his wife, after he's attacked by Master Darque. His love for his wife resurrects him as the hero. It's a story based on the relationship between Mirage and his wife, and the conflict between Dr. Mirage and Master Darque—good and evil."

NEW YORK CITY MORGUE, AUGUST 13, 1993, 5:10 P.M.
DR. WIESTHEIMER--- THESE ARE THE FOLKS I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT
SO...YOU'RE THE "GHOSTBUSTERS" THAT LT. MORGAN THINKS SO HIGHLY OF?
I'M A PARAPSYCHOLOGIST ACTUALLY.
I'M DOCTOR HAWEN MIRAGE AND THIS IS MY WIFE AND ASSOCIATE--- CARMEN RUIZ.
HI. CAN WE SEE THE OTHERS NOW, DOC?
ARE THESE GUYS FOR REAL, MANN?
SHE IS, BROTHER. DID YOU GET A LOOK AT HER? HOLY...

All Dr. Mirage Art: Bernard Chang/Kevin Brancl of colors, Maurice Gutiérrez

The Second Life of Dr. Mirage focuses on the hero's two major relationships—one with his wife Carmen, the other with his nemesis, Master Darque.

Chang emphasizes that three elements are crucial to the title's success. "*Star Wars* was action/adventure, romance and humor, all rolled into one," he says. "All three of those elements get the fans' attention. Those three are important to establish a good series, and that's what I hope we'll accomplish with *Dr. Mirage*."

The two central relationships in *The Second Life of Dr. Mirage* are the loving one between Mirage and his wife Carmen, and the adversarial one between Mirage and the sinister Master Darque. "All throughout his life, Dr. Mirage has been looking for someone like Master Darque, someone with the power to re-animate the dead or control others, because what Master Darque does is *not* science," Chang notes. "It can't be calculated or measured, and Mirage is the counterpart to that."

Dr. Mirage may sound like a dramatic, comic book name, and Chang admits that it is an alias. Chang and writer Bob Layton (CS #24) decided to use the Chinese word for "mirage" to name their hero, which unfortunately made their hero Dr. Dong Fong Hwen—and since "Dr. Dong" seemed unlikely to strike terror into the hearts of evildoers, it was Anglicized to "Dr. Mirage."

Their hero certainly has mystical powers, but Chang says Dr. Mirage can't exactly be considered a superhero. "When you say 'superhero,' most people think of Superman and characters with large, bulging muscles," the artist declares. "He's not going to be flying in [fanfare] and saving the day—we'll leave that to others. We really want to concentrate on character development.

"One thing that I think is consistent with all of the Valiant Universe characters is that not everyone is muscular and super-strong. Solar is built like an average guy, and I don't want Dr. Mirage to look too muscular, like a Superman or a Colossus. I try to give him the physical build of an average athlete. That way, the reader believes Dr. Mirage *could* exist in actual life—if the guy is going to be fighting supervillains 24 hours a day, where does he find the time to work out?"

The Second Life of Dr. Mirage is nevertheless tied strongly to the other Valiant titles, partly because of the all-encompassing evil of Master Darque. "Since there's a strong relationship with Master Darque, Dr. Mirage will inevitably turn up in *Shadowman* and the new *Secret Weapons*, which embodies all the heroes in the Valiant Universe."

Despite the fantastic nature of much of *Dr. Mirage*, the real-life scenes are the most interesting for Chang to draw. "It's fun to learn new things. They go off to the Himalayas in the first issue, and the settings are drawn as realistically as I can, using equipment and photo-references," he says. "When they're searching for Master Darque, they go to a temple in Tibet to find the

Dr. Mirage has the perfect outfit for heroism in the Himalayas. His ski wear becomes his "costume."

All Dr. Mirage Characters & Art: Trademark & Copyright 1993 Voyager Communications

Geomancer's bones. Drawing that, rather than just making up a setting, really tests your skill, because you're trying to portray something that's already there. When I start drawing the mystical powers that Master Darque is using, I start creating my own effects, trying to get different things to look interesting for the readers.

"Many people like to draw fight scenes, but I really enjoy drawing the dialogue scenes. Storytelling is what I derive the most fun from. Many people can draw very well, but if they can't convey the story to the reader, their job as a comic book illustrator, or sequential artist, was unsuccessful. It's very important to have good storytelling within the pencils. When you pick up a comic at first, you don't read it, you just flip through it, and if you get a good sense of the story, the artwork can be a bonus. You always have to grab the reader's attention before he starts going in deeper."

Chang, who has rapidly become one of Valiant's most talked-about new artists, is actually still in college, where he majors in architecture. A comics fan while in junior high school, Chang drifted away for a few years before deciding to pursue a comics career. "It's a full-time commitment—you can't just like drawing a lot and decide you want to do comics. It's almost a way of life. People think it's a lot of fun to be a comic book artist, but it's also very hard—you have all-nighters, and you constantly try to think of new ways to tell stories."

After trying to break into the field for two years, he showed his work to Bob Layton at the 1992 San Diego Comicon. Layton brought him to Valiant, where he pencilled *Archer & Armstrong* #9, *H.A.R.D.Corps* #5, and *Deathmate Yellow* before starting on *Dr. Mirage*.

The artist admits that his schedule could be gruelling, especially since he'll be attending college full-time this year while pencilling a monthly book. "I also play on the basketball team at Pratt Institute: we're an NCAA Division III school, and we have practice three or four hours a night once the season gets going," he explains. "I've worked my schedule so I have two or three days free, and I can drop by Valiant to drop off work and get critiques. I have to get as much sleep as I can on the weekends, because I'll be up all the time during the week!"

Chang tells aspiring artists to pay close attention to their past work, because they must constantly do better. "People ask me which artists I look at, and I tell them to look at artists for different things," he says. "I used to like Walt Simonson when he was doing *X-Factor* and *Battlestar Galactica*. Right now, though, I see a lot of movies. Television is boring compared to movies—the camera is basically on a tripod, and you can't get many angles from it. But a movie camera goes up and down, and gives you a different way of looking at a scene."

The first *Second Life of Dr. Mirage* is actually the hero's origin, and Chang is quick to point out that it features a non-enhanced cover. "I don't really think there's a need for a gimmick cover on this, and if we did put an enhancement on it, it would only raise the issue's price," he says. "I think it's important to keep it at an even level, for the fans. Nowadays, a lot of companies are doing gimmick covers for issues that really weren't going to sell that well anyway, so they'll slap on a gimmick cover to try and boost sales."

Issue #2 continues where *Dr. Mirage* #1 left off, as the human Dr. Mirage becomes something more. Mirage and Carmen must escape from the temple where Master Darque has challenged them, and resurrected a number of dead monks to hunt them down.

Chang points out that Mirage is wearing actual ski gear for the trip into the mountains, but now that Mirage has become transparent and cannot be touched, the ski wear becomes his "costume."

"On the cover of issue #2, Carmen's running down the mountain, and is passing through Mirage," he says. "That's another strain on their relationship. They're married, but she's not going to be able to touch him anymore! They have to find a way to overcome that. I hope that later on in the series, he'll learn to manipulate energy, like Solar, and take solid form. He might even change his costume!

"Issue #3 sees them back at home, and Carmen's parents come to visit. In his current state, he's dressed in his ski gear, and they're going to have to try and work around that. He can't eat anything, because it'll pass through him. It's almost a comedic issue, though it also deals with strains on a relationship, and I'm sure Master Darque will probably pop up somewhere. It's almost like *The Greatest American Hero*, where a guy is given a suit and expected to become a hero,

(continued on page 64)

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Brandon Peterson knows drawing comics is the world's greatest job.

RISING STAR

All Stryke Force Art: Trademark & Copyright 1993 Top Cow Productions, Inc.

Art: Brandon Peterson/Marc Silvestri/Colors: Joe Chiodo

By KIM HOWARD JOHNSON

Morgan Stryker has developed an interesting way to relax between his *Cyberforce* assignments—he has assembled four super-powered mercenaries to take on the jobs nobody else will touch. Although he hasn't given up his day job with *Cyberforce* (CS #29), Stryker is also starring in the new monthly *Codename: Stryke Force*, created by Marc Silvestri and written in collaboration with his brother Eric (the same team who developed *Cyberforce*.)

The artwork for the ongoing Image series is by one of the newest—and fastest-rising—stars in comics, former *Uncanny X-Men* penciller Brandon Peterson, who says he couldn't be happier about his new series.

"*Codename: Stryke Force* features the three-armed Stryker from *Cyberforce*, and four mercenaries that he has employed for a variety of covert missions—missions that the government can't handle, but doesn't want known," explains Peterson.

Photo: Laurie Bradach

Beginning with *The Uncanny X-Men* as his first regular book, artist Brandon Peterson is on the rise and climbing higher.

"He's the least human-looking, a combination of a gorilla and a steam-roller," Peterson says of Black Anvil.

Art: Brandon Peterson/Dan Panosian

"You say your nuclear submarine has just been hijacked by terrorists, and you don't want the nations of the world knowing about it? Then, you call Codename: Stryke Force, pay a healthy amount of money and they'll go in and handle the situation. They're known in espionage and superhero circles, but not to the general public. There are many situations where super-humans would be especially useful. The Waco incident was a public relations disaster that cost lives and millions of dollars—what would they have paid for somebody who could turn invisible or walk through walls? It would never even have made the evening news, other than 'Some guy in Texas was captured today.' There are many situations like that, and this is where Stryke Force is used."

The team is led by Stryker, who encountered several other "metahumans for hire" while serving as a bodyguard in the past. It is Stryker who gathers the four metahuman mercenaries, Bloodbow, Killrazor, Black Anvil and Tempest, for his adventures. "They're motivated by profit—they don't mind risking their butts on a dangerous mission, but they're going to be *compensated*," says Peterson.

"Stryker's team includes Bloodbow, a master of projectiles. He has really good aim for anything muscle-powered. If he throws it or shoots a bow, he can lock onto a target with deadly accuracy. That's his specialty.

"Killrazor has the ability to produce metal-like protrusions from out of his body, but it causes him a lot of pain. He could have claws pop out from his hands, but they would rip his skin—and *he* doesn't heal!" laughs Peterson, making a knowing reference to that other claw-handed hero, Wolverine. "He's a master of hand-to-hand combat, and tends to make razors come out of his arms. He also carries swords and knives—he's a cut-up!

Art: Brandon Peterson/Dan Panosian

Tempest, according to Peterson, "seems to be the group's wild card."

"The strong guy of the group—it's almost like you *have* to follow the superhero flow chart—is Black Anvil, and I think he's the most interesting character. He's the least human-looking, a combination of a gorilla and steam-roller. He's super-strong and near invulnerable, pretty much the team's brute force.

"Our lone female is Tempest, who has various energy-projecting powers; she can fly and cause blasts. We haven't really discovered the extent of her power yet, and we're going to be playing around with that—she seems to be the group's wild card.

"They're a group of mercenaries that take on various missions for various reasons," says Peterson. "*Codename: Stryke Force* will appeal to fans of Marvel's *Punisher*, and there are also elements of *X-Men*. It's super-powered paramilitary action at its finest."

Black Anvil is not only Peterson's favorite character to draw, his personality also appeals to the artist. "He has the neatest attitude—he's the group's wiseguy, real flippant. He would push someone through a wall head-first and say, 'This is what you need to get ahead in real estate.' He's the nut, the most interesting visually, and I think kids are going to like him the most. Black Anvil *is* human, he's just a genetic mix-up."

The Stryke Force members all have super-powers, says Peterson, though some have additional abilities. "Some of them are skilled, but all of them are super-human, whether by natural means or otherwise," he notes. "Stryker has obviously been cyber-enhanced, but his brain also has the ability to handle three arms, so he obviously wasn't human when he was cybernetically enhanced. Many of the facts will come out as time goes on. The team is pretty much introduced in Image fashion—'Here they are! We're explaining as we go, so just keep with us, folks!' "

Peterson, who has committed to pencil at least 12 issues of *Codename: Stryke Force*, says he didn't become involved with the series initially—"It became involved with me!" he laughs. "I was working on the X-books at Marvel, and one afternoon I got a phone call from Marc Silvestri, asking about my current status.

"At the time, Marvel was trying to get John Romita Jr. on *Uncanny X-Men* because they had originally promised it to him. I got really nervous, because as a freelancer, when somebody takes you off a book and says, 'Don't worry, we'll get you more X-work,' it *isn't* the same as drawing and getting your paycheck every month. I didn't have any control over where my career was going, and I was left hanging at the editor's whim. What could I do? He wasn't displeased with my work, but he wanted to keep both of us happy. I

knew where I stood and I was getting worried about it, and that's just when Image called."

Image's more open, spontaneous, non-bureaucratic aspects greatly appealed to Peterson. "More than anything else, what Image has going for it is the fact that *every* deal you make with an Image person is a deal with *that person*—he doesn't have to answer to an editor-in-chief, a president or a board of stockholders. At Marvel, I felt for [*X-Men* editor] Bob Harras, because I would want a contract or some security, and he couldn't give that—it would be up to the editor-in-chief, who would have to talk to the president, who would have to mull things over. Image is just able to offer more. They're talking significant increases in income and control. I'll have an opportunity in a year—and I'll probably take it—to do my own project," Peterson announces.

Peterson is a relative newcomer to the comics scene, noting that he only began reading them when he started college five years ago. "At the time, the big guys were Jim [Lee], Todd [McFarlane], Marc [Silvestri] and Rob [Liefeld]," he says. "Marc was at the top at that time, and Jim, Rob and Todd were all starting to rise. Those were the guys who influenced me the most while I was developing my style. It's a big thrill for me to be working with them."

The artist explains that he was still in college, pursuing a degree in illustration, when he decided on a career in comics. "I was originally interested in being a fantasy/science-fiction painter for paperback and album covers, but I just didn't have the patience. Oil painting frustrated the heck out of me, because it takes so long to do just *one* painting, and I started thinking about doing comics."

At the beginning of his junior year in college, DC editors Andy Helfer and Dan Raspler offered him a four-issue run on *Legion of Super-Heroes* #15-18, and Peterson spent the semester going to classes 40 hours a week, working on comics 40 hours a week, and spending another 20 hours a week on a part-time job ("I wanted to keep it in case the comics stuff dried up!") editing the school paper. "I was burnt out real bad by the semester's end!" he laughs. "The next semester, I just took on one 60-page annual, so I could take some time on it. And I really enjoyed doing *Legion Annual* #2."

Art: Brandon Peterson/Dan Panosian

Killrazor is "a master of hand-to-hand combat, and tends to make razors come out of his arms."

Art: Brandon Peterson/Marc Silvestri

Cyberforce's Morgan Stryken runs with a new gang in *Codename: Stryke Force* and still keeps his day job.

Peterson continued doing occasional projects, including some *Star Trek* stories for DC, enough to keep his hand in the field but not enough to become swamped with work. At the beginning of his senior year, he got a call from X-editor Harras, and after explaining his workload and school situation, ended up doing pin-ups for the X-annuals.

Harras called back a few months later, when another artist was running late on *X-Factor* #72. "He needed me to pencil six pages over the weekend, and I said, 'OK, I'll do it.' I thought it was a great opportunity, so I did six pages in a weekend and handed them over. He said, 'Great! This is awesome!' So I said, 'How about getting me some more work, Bob?' He said, 'The problem is that I already have Jim on *X-Men*, Whilce [Portacio] on *Uncanny*, Marc on *Wolverine*, Rob on *X-Force* and Larry [Stroman] on *X-Factor*, and they're pretty solid. So, I really don't need anyone.' " Ironically, just a month later, Lee, Portacio, Silvestri and Liefeld helped found Image Comics, and their involvement with Marvel ended. Harras called Peterson with an opportunity.

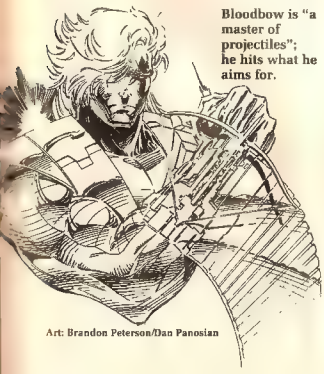
"He gave me my choice of books, and since *X-Men* and *Uncanny* were snapped up by John Romita Jr. and Andy Kubert, I chose *Wolverine*, because it was a single superhero, and I

wouldn't go nuts drawing hundreds of characters. They flew me to New York to meet [scripter] Larry Hama just after graduation. I was happily sitting in Bob Harras' office, when I noticed the *Wolverine* schedule sheet on the wall didn't have my name on it. I sucked in my tongue for a second, until Bob told me I was on *Uncanny X-Men*! They wanted me to fill in for three issues because John Romita Jr. was taking a little long on *Cable*, so I said OK.

"I came home from New York completely freaked out. Those three issues turned into six issues, then nine issues, and the response was really great. I couldn't believe it—my first regular book was *Uncanny X-Men*! That doesn't happen too often! Then the Image offer came up. I've had a meteoric rise!" he laughs. "I have absolutely no complaints—I couldn't have chosen a better career path!"

Peterson says he has noticed significant differences in attitudes at Marvel and Image. "At Marvel, I really felt like I was a cog in the machine sometimes. Bob was a good editor, and I had no problems with him—he really stuck by me early on—but they really make it clear to you that the characters come first. The company is number one, and you are an *employee*," he says. "I don't get that at Image. Marc calls me up, and we sit there and gab for an hour or two about nothing. There's much more camaraderie, and I feel like I'm working *with* someone, rather than *for* someone.

"The Image guys were all freelancers, and they know what worries a freelancer. In my opinion, comics is the greatest job in the world, but it does have its downside—you can't get a house loan or a car loan if you don't have a regular 9-to-5 job, and the Image guys know that and work around it. Many times I would bring up a point, and Marc would already have it explained. I told him that he has an answer to every problem I ever brought him, and he said, 'Yeah, because I was in your place a year ago, and I know what you want.' And that's the truth, because they've been there. They're much more willing to compromise than Marvel. The Marvel editors may want things to go a certain way, but many times their hands are tied, because they're working for a company."



Bloodbow is "a master of projectiles"; he hits what he aims for.

Art: Brandon Peterson/Dan Panosian

Design & Layout: Calvin Lee

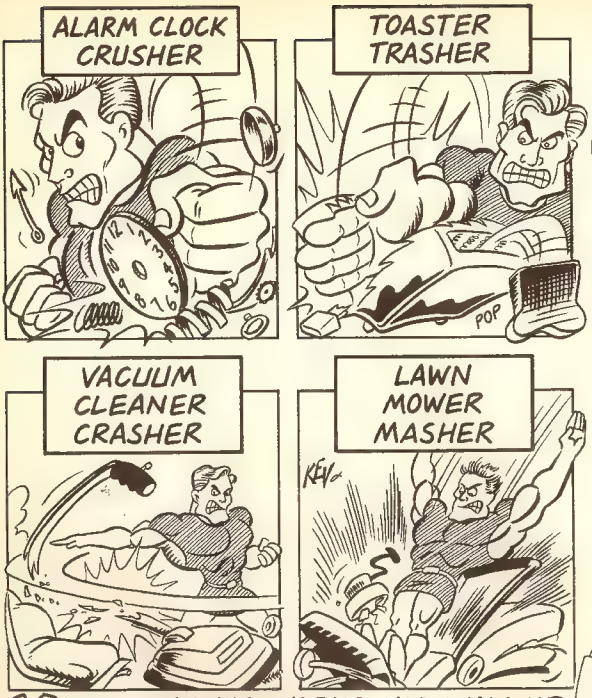
Art: Brandon Peterson/Dan Panosian

"They're motivated by profit—they don't mind risking their butts on a dangerous mission, but they're going to be compensated," Peterson says.

Peterson says Silvestri solicited his input while creating *Codename: Stryke Force*. "He asked me what I wanted to do; he always talked to me a little before he decided something," Peterson says. "He listened to me quite a bit. I really like to know, if I can, what people are saying in a panel, so I can design their facial expressions correctly. He said he wasn't used to working like that, but it was OK with him. At Marvel, you might have had an ego to contend with, if a writer had been on the book a long time."

The artist admits that he has an unusual perspective, having been reading comics for just five years, and working in the field for nearly half that time. "I've had to retrograde a lot. I would find somebody I liked, like Arthur Adams, and somebody would say, 'He draws like Michael Golden.' I would say, 'Who?' and go into the back issues and look up people. But I've met many people in the industry, and I do listen. It's great for me to go to cons and listen to Dick Giordano or Joe Kubert, though I probably don't hold those guys in the awe that another contemporary of mine would. I'm much more likely to hold Jim [Lee] or Arthur Adams in awe," he admits. "Still, my perspective keeps me a little more in touch with

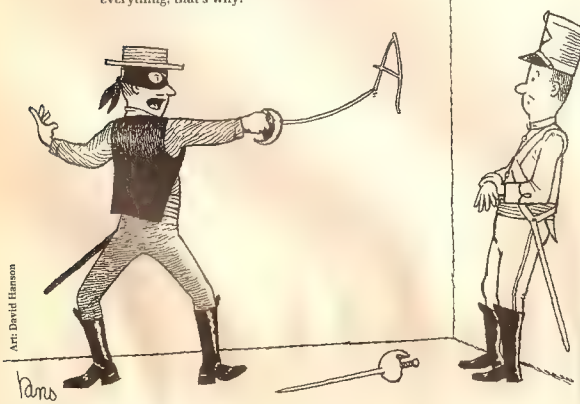
(continued on page 64)



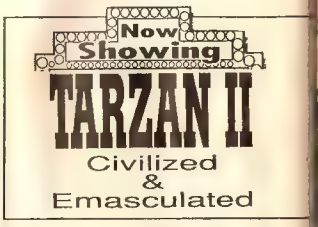
Art: Kevin Brockschmidt

YOUNG MAGNUS WORKS HIS WAY UP THE ROBOT FIGHTER LADDER

"Because I'm tired of being last in line for everything, that's why!"



Art: David Hanson



ONS

Art: Paul Ivy

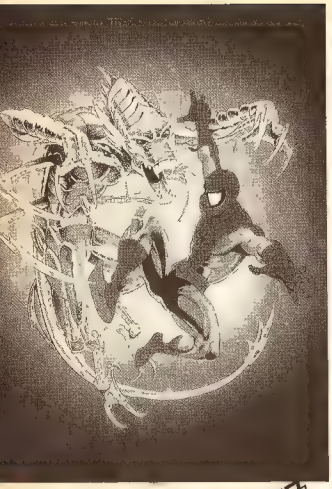
Art: Kevin Breckenridge

HOW MUTANTS USUALLY FIRST DISCOVER THEIR SUPER POWERS

Art: Adam Dekraker

Art: Armstrong

Art: Scott Brooks



WEB WORK

Once again, Spider-Man's in an amazing battle against evil. And it looks like he could use some help in spectacular video game combat.

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Spider-Man 3 game for the Game Boy (10).

Kane

(continued from page 43)

but Marvel was out. "I had differences with them," is all Kane will say. (Those differences virtually erased Kane's name from the 1991 book *Marvel—Five Fabulous Decades of the World's Greatest Comics*. Not counting captions, Kane is mentioned exactly once in the text, and then glancingly. Slip-up or snub? Bear in mind that Kane drew such landmarks as *Spider-Man* #100, the notorious "drug issues" of *Spider-Man*, the issues when Gwen Stacy and the Green Goblin died, the renewed Captain Marvel and Warlock, some of the bestselling *Conan* issues, the covers for *X-Men* #94 and *Giant-Size X-Men* #1...)

Marvel's loss was DC's gain. Kane and Roy Thomas reteamed on a glorious four-issue series called *The Ring of the Nibelung*, since collected into a trade paperback. *The Ring* exercised both men's penchant for myth-telling, and featured undoubtedly the best coloring job ever on Kane's work, courtesy of his friend Jim Woodring, himself an accomplished independent cartoonist. As the '90s progressed, Kane has appeared in titles as distinct as *Monster in My Pocket* and a three-issue *Legends of the Dark Knight* series written by Howard Chaykin (#24-26). Waiting in the wings may be a project for Malibu with Steve Grant, which Kane is staying mum about for now.

What keeps Kane current, besides his still-striking compositions and the poised power of his figures, is his desire to *be* current. "He's very flexible, and doesn't get into a rut," says Salicrup. "His recent work is influenced by what he sees other artists doing, such as those at Image. He seems more likely to pump up the volume, while keeping his unmistakable style.

"The last time we worked together, we did some *Spider-Man* annuals for Marvel. At the time, Todd McFarlane's Spider-Man was hot. You would expect a veteran artist to say, 'Well, I'll do *my* Spider-Man.' But Gil is very critical and analytical. He saw what was good about Todd's Spider-Man, and his version reflected that."

Put it this way: Gil Kane doesn't coast. "It's hard to realize I'm the age I am," he says. "I feel as driven by ambition, as full of the need for expression, as I ever have in my life. But age does funny things to you—you can feel your qualities hemorrhaging away. So, I'm working more deliberately, bearing down on my work the way I should have done 35 years ago. It's like I've started a race and I'm beginning to notice the engine is faltering. But I don't care. I still intend to finish the race."

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X-Men

(continued from page 31)

backyard. It's much more satisfying to run with the ball and not be stopped by someone else. I feel very proprietary toward my characters. For example, *Doom* #9 is a fill-in, but Doom is *my* character. I really don't like seeing other folks work with my guy, after all the work I've put into him."

Of course, Moore admits that the nascent X-Men owe a large debt to the visual style and dynamics of artists Ron Lim and Adam Kubert. "They're great!" he exclaims. "Ron's one of the most prolific and enthusiastic artists I've ever worked with. I can't believe what he has done already, and it's eminently easy to write for him. And Adam's inking is a great match for Ron's pencils. Overall, I have to admit that I'm pretty happy with all the stuff I've seen. It's funny, though; Ron only lives about an hour-and-a-half away, and we keep meaning to get together and talk about some books, but our schedules never match up. Life is funny that way."

MUTANT? NO NO. I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
RELAX, BROTHER FITZ. THERE'S NO SHAME IN YOUR IDENTITY. I'M A MUTANT
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Life has certainly thrown Moore some interesting curves. Beginning as an art assistant to Howard Chaykin on *The Shadow* and *Times 2*, he moved on to become the artist on *American Flagg!* and ended up writing it, too. "I did that book for a year," he says. "It's funny, and very frustrating, that the first thing I wrote for Marvel had a bigger audience than all the *Flagg!* I wrote. Of course, *Flagg!* is a lot different in tone; it's a funnier book than the ones I'm doing now.

"I did some art for backup features, then did *Superboy* at DC for a year. It tied into the TV show and had no connection to the DC Universe, so I got to do my *Bizarro* and pseudo-*Legion* stories without wrecking DC continuity. And I didn't have to tie it in with three *Superman* books, either. Plus, getting to work with Jim Lee and Curt Swan was fantastic."

Moore's writing career got onto a faster track when he collaborated with Chaykin on several scripts for TV's *Flash*. "Howard has been my writing partner for most of my screen work," he says. "Writing for *The Flash* was an incredible experience, and incredibly rewarding—the show's cast and crew were topnotch. I thought it was a real gas to have an office on the Warner Bros. lot. We got to do more on that show than anyone thought we could, and did great things with the quality of scripts and the actual productions. As happens a lot of the time, the show was this really expensive, quirky thing that was scheduled against the toughest competition on TV: *Cosby, The Simpsons*. And *Beverly Hills 90210* premiered that year, on *that* night. Who can fight that? If we had made the show a few years ago, we might've been renewed, but it wasn't in the cards. I'm surprised we lasted a whole year; we sure weren't in the lead on that race."

From there, Moore went on to write a few episodes of *The Human Target, Palace Guard* (which never aired) and an *Iron Wolf* book with Chaykin. His future projects include a Prestige format Superman book called *Under a Yellow Sun*, and an episode of *Viper*, a new NBC show teaming him once more with Danny Bilson and Paul DeMeo, producers of *The Flash* and *Human Target*.

As for his current effort, he hopes that the readers pick up *X-Men 2099* for its own sake. "I hope people like the book," John Francis Moore notes, "so that if they pay their $1.95 for that first foil-embossed cardstock issue, they get their money's worth, and it's not just an investment buy. Most of all, I hope they read the stuff. Investing is fine, if you want to have a hobby, but I wish we sold a million copies because a million people wanted to *read* them."

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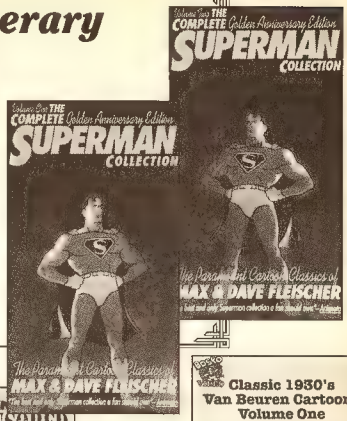

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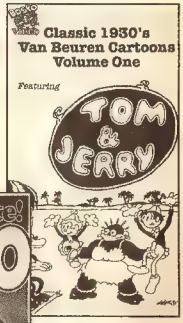

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Dr. Mirage

(continued from page 50)

even though he *hasn't* learned to use it. The first few issues will be tricky—he's not going to be able to bring about world peace, or do even half of what Solar can do. He's going to be testing his new powers."

Chang praises Layton and editor Mark Moretti for all of their help. "Whenever I got a new plot, Bob and I would go over it. We would do a complete read-through, and he would actually act out scenes for me, which gives me a better vision of what he had intended," Chang explains. "I like to lay out the whole book first, and I go over it afterward with Mark. We go through them page by page, and he'll give me tips on how to tell the story better. I'll say, 'Hey, Coach, check this out.' They always have a minute for me, and for everyone—that's what makes Valiant a really good company."

The artist is so happy working with Valiant that he recently signed an exclusive three-year contract. "It's a big step, and I don't think there are many people doing that nowadays in the comics industry," he says. "They figure if they sign an exclusive contract, they might get a better offer with another company making more money. But for me, personally, I have to believe in the people I work for to put out my best effort. I really believe in Valiant and what they bring into the comic book industry. They're trying to bring fun back into comics, with good stories and realistic characters.

"To make an exclusive commitment for three years, especially considering how fast the market is moving nowadays for creators, has to entail a great sense of trust, and I get that from the guys at Valiant. Everyone on the creative team knows everyone on the business team, and on production—it's like a big family over there. I wouldn't have been able to get the response I have now had I gone to another company."

Bernard Chang would like to spend at least the first year of his contract drawing *Dr. Mirage*, to give it a sense of continuity. He's quite grateful to have the opportunity to premiere the new title. "It's the beginning of my career, and it could go either way now," he says. "Many people who have been in the industry a long time have never gotten to do a 'name' project. *Dr. Mirage* is a 'name' project, with a lot of publicity, and I feel very fortunate that Valiant has given me the chance to prove myself at such an early stage of my career. Few people get a chance like this one—it's once in a lifetime."

Peterson

(continued from page 55)

the fans, because many fans weren't reading comic books five years ago. It keeps me aware of their interests, because I don't have much history to contend with!"

Peterson is keeping up with current fan-favorite companies with his pencils on *Deathmate Black*, but he notes the Image/Valiant crossover was more complicated than some of his other comics work.

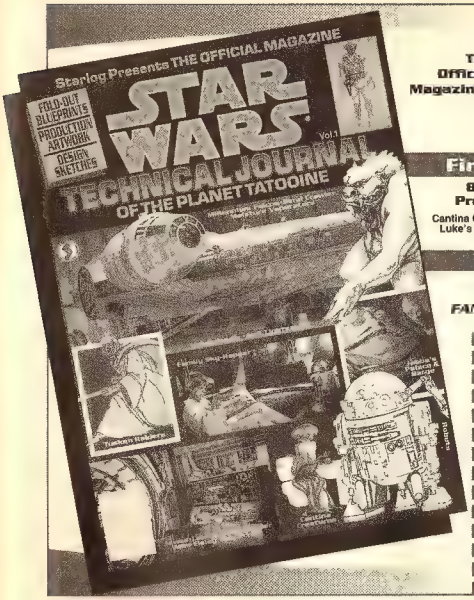
"It was a little frustrating," he admits. "I did the first six pages, and then four pages later on. In the first six pages, they introduced many of these characters, so I got to take first crack at them—I got to design X-O Manowar's armor. The writer and I were going crazy, because we would get a plot and I would lay out some pages, and Valiant would throw down the flag—'Oh, you can't have Turok doing that!' Valiant got very finicky, because they don't own Turok, Solar and Magnus—they license them from another company [Western Publishing]. So, we made Turok a bit player, and used X-O Manowar more. Image is looser and more laidback, while Valiant is very structured. I'm not saying that it's bad, but it's hard to work with that when you're used to going your own way! For the most part, it was a good experience, and I think the fans will like it a lot."

Peterson also encourages fans who hope to follow in his footsteps, though he emphasizes that desire can sometimes be as important as ability.

"I was persistent as hell," he explains to people who hope to break into comics. "I tell people just to keep working at it. *Every* month I would send out a new five-page submission to *every* editor I knew—30 packages a month, and maybe get a response from six of them. And, when I saw them in person, I was even more annoying—but *polite*—because there was no way they were not going to look at my work. It's persistence, it all depends on how bad you want it!"

For Peterson, the hard work paid off. After graduating from college to a job pencilling *Uncanny X-Men*, and drawing *Codename: Stryke Force* for Image less than two years later, Brandon Peterson seems almost embarrassed at his success.

"The future can't get any better, unless Stan Lee comes and hands me the keys to Marvel," he jokes. "I can't complain. I'm doing great, getting a good fan base going, and people seem enthusiastic about my work. I enjoy what I'm doing now, and in another year or so I'll be doing my own series. Sometimes I wish I had some horror stories to tell."



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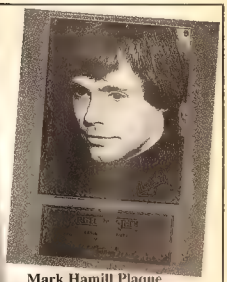

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Exosquad

(continued from page 35)

codified Neosapien principles into a quasi-dogma, almost like a religion. She has romanticized their mission."

When the Neosapiens take over, the Exosquad units off combatting the pirates are closed out, with most of their fleet destroyed. "The Exosquad is a mere shadow of what it once was," Segal notes. "It's really the only military-type force capable of presenting a challenge to the Neosapiens. What is it like under Neosapien occupation? Phaeton has a governor general appointed on Earth, Venus and Mars to rule each of these planets and control the humans."

As for the space pirates, they'll be part of the background, constantly shifting loyalties. Sometimes the pirates will be allied with the Exosquad against the Neosapiens, and occasionally with the Neosapiens against the Exosquad.

Segal is pleased with the different factions he has established in *Exosquad*.. "I am personally intrigued by Phaeton and the Neosapiens. They're aliens, but they're 'us.' There's also something challenging about the Underground, underdogs fighting against overwhelming odds, using ingenuity to fight back against an insurmountable foe."

The show will also feature some fancy hardware. "We've tried to create symbiotic machinery with which an Exosquad trooper can merge. The machine exists as a shell, but when the trooper climbs in, his brain, his senses, his every movement is reflected by the machine. The powerlifter from *ALIENS* could be seen as an early version of this, the way an adding machine becomes a calculator and then a computer. It interfaces with the operator. The Neosapiens have their own versions of these augmented machines," he relates.

Exosquad will utilize state-of-the-art animation. "We use computer-generated material in terms of layout, character design and movement; there are even some 3-D options we've looked at," Segal says.

"We've tried to take advantage, wherever we could, of the state-of-the-art animation process, but it's *not* gonna be *Aladdin* or *Beauty & the Beast*. I think the state of animation today is at a pivotal moment; in fact, the most interesting one in the history of animation. We're making a transition from traditional animation to a whole new environment of computer and virtual reality-animation. The future of animation looks exciting."

Although *Exosquad* promises a great deal of special FX, it will rise or fall on its characters. "Hopefully, there's enough diversity that there will be audience favorites, and you'll follow their lives, almost like an animated soap opera. The show has a continuity. While each episode exists in a freestanding way, it all connects in story arcs. *X-Men* tried this as well.

"When we go from a weekly show to the [daily] strip that we anticipate for '94, that story arc will pan out over all the episodes, so that even though there'll be a tapestry composed of all these different pieces, I hope it will be challenging to the audience. *Exosquad* deals with intelligent issues; it's *not* just mindless violence—there's something going on here. I hope kids can lock in on that and follow the show."

Exosquad won't skimp on action, though. "We push the envelope where we believe the storytelling justifies it. There will be no gratuitous violence, but there will be a high level of action on the show. We make no apologies about that," Segal announces. "It's intelligently and prudently done.

"There are casualties [in the show], but they're off-camera and handled with taste. I think the audience will be vastly surprised at where we end up. Here at Universal, we have a tradition of moviemaking, and we're trying to give *Exosquad* a theatrical quality. We look at each episode as a miniature movie."

Segal is also planning a cartoon "65 million years in the making"—more or less. "Let me just say this," he grins. "Universal Pictures is looking to transform *Jurassic Park* into an ongoing franchise, with discussions about possible sequels and a theme park attraction. We've developed an approach for an animated TV series, but *no* decisions have been made as to whether or not we're going to do it.

"Steven Spielberg is the ultimate arbiter of what manner the property will continue to evolve in, and Steven will consider the animated TV series. To the extent that we've considered it, the answer is 'yes,' but whether it's *officially* going to happen, the answer is 'not yet' and we don't know that it will, but it's something we're thinking about." On his desk is a possible graphic for the animated adventure. "We took the movie's logo—the skeleton of the *Tyrannosaurus rex*—and filled it out [with flesh and eyes]."

Other Universal horrors may follow. "We're also developing a number of approaches to animating the classic [Universal movie] monsters," he reveals. "And doing so in a way that preserves their integrity. In other words, I'm not looking to turn them into 'Monster Babies.' We're trying to find an innovative way to animate these monsters. Frankly, I want to preserve the scariness of these characters—I don't want to water them down," he promises.

"We've got a lot of interesting talent on this. John Landis is fascinated by it, and we've been working with him on how to take the monsters into animation. He would help us bring an interesting creative vision to these characters."

Which creatures become cartoons depends on "which ones of the Universal legacy lend themselves to animation. We've looked at *Creature from the Black Lagoon*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, the original *Phantom of the Opera*, *Dracula*, even Chucky from *Child's Play* and the great white shark [from *Jaws*]. These are currently in discussion, but there are no plans yet. If we come up with the right attitude, one that doesn't diminish the property and is something people would get excited about...I don't want to do something foolish with it."

As for the near future, "we're looking at doing new *Woody Woodpeckers*, bringing Woody into the 21st century, and we have several more action/adventure fantasy series coming," Jeff Segal smiles. "Lovers of science fiction can expect to see some very interesting things coming from this studio in the years ahead!"

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COMICS SCENE

All of these upcoming projects are live-action unless specified. Those boxed are new or updated since last listing. **Not everything listed will ultimately ever be made.** S: script; D: director; P: producer, EP: executive producer, C: creator, AN: animated, LA: live-action. Syn: syndicated. HB: Hanna-Barbera, Nel: Nelvana, WD: Disney, WB: Warner Bros., PP: Paramount, U: Universal, Col: Columbia, Am: Amblin; DH: Dark Horse, L: Largo. **Attn. all pros:** Info to be added to this list is cheerfully invited. Send to COMICS SCENE, 475 Park Ave. South, 8th Flr., NY, NY 10016. (Info as of 7/13/93)

Addams Family. Sequel. PP. Fall. AN series. ABC. HB.

The Airtight Garage. AN.

Alias. Film. U. S: David S. Goyer. P: P. Lenkov, S. Daniel.

ALIENS vs. Predator. Film. DH/Fox.

Animaniacs. AN. Fox. WB/Am. Fall.

Annie. Film. Rastar.

Archie. LA Film. DIC.

Barbarella. LA film. Nel.

❑ **Batman.** AN film. X-mas. LA sequel. D: Joel Schumacher (?).

Betty Boop. AN film. S: Jerry Rees. EP: R. Fleischer, R. Zanuck. MGM.

Black Panther. Film. W/Wesley Snipes. Sony.

Blade. Film.

Blankman. Film. C: Damon Wayans, Eric Gold. D: Mike Binder. Sony.

Blondie. Film. WB.

Bonkers D. Bobcat. Syn AN series. WD. Fall '93.

Broom Hilda. Film. P: Ernest Chambers.

❑ **Busby Bobcat.** AN TV special. Calico. Imagination Factory.

Cadillacs & Dinosaurs. AN series. Nel. CBS. Fall.

Casper. Film. Am. U.

❑ **Catwoman.** Film. WB. W/ Michelle Pfeiffer.

Conan. AN TV series.

Concrete. Film. DH.

The Crow. Film. In post-production.

There's romance in the air in ABC's *Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman*. Dean Cain and Teri Hatcher star.

Lois & Clark: Jeffry Fitzgerald/Copyright 1993 Capital Cities/ABC, Inc.

Photo: NBC

Already animated as TV specials and several movies, the *Peanuts* gang also went live-action Off-Broadway in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (presented on TV's *Hallmark Hall of Fame*).

Happiness is a Warm Movie

The *Peanuts* watch is on. But according to producer/writer/director John Hughes, there isn't much to report on this live-action movie version of the classic Charles Schulz comic strip.

"I've been having some discussions with Charles Schulz on what the proper direction for *Peanuts* as a motion picture is," says Hughes, whose other comic-strip adaptation, *Dennis the Menace*, is in release. "As far as when filming will start, all I can say is that it's imminent."

Hughes, who's scripting *Peanuts*, says none of the characters have been cast, and responds to Macaulay Culkin's rumored interest in the film with "It's news to me. There's nothing definite, and I haven't been approached by him."

While expressing a desire to direct again, Hughes doesn't feel he'll do so on *Peanuts*. "I would like to come back to directing with something a bit more wacky."

—*Marc Shapiro*

Crusader Rabbit. AN TV.

Deadworld. Film. S: Mark Pavia (D), Jack O'Donnell (P).

Dinosaurs for Hire. AN series. Fox.

Dr. Strange. Film. S/D: Wes Craven. Savoy Ent.

Doom's IV. Film. P/S: Rob Liefeld. Am.

❑ **Droopy.** AN series. 26 episodes. Fox. Includes 13 new episodes.

Dudley Do-Right. Film. U.

Elektra Assassin. Film.

❑ **Exosquad.** AN TV series. U. (see article)

❑ **Fantastic Four.** Film. Labor Day release. (see article)

Faust. Film. D: Stuart Gordon. S: David Quinn.

Flaming Carrot. Film.

The Flintstones. Film. Fred: John Goodman. Barney: Rick Moranis. U/Am. D: Brian Levant. S: J. Jennewein, T. Parker, G. Ross. P: Bruce Cohen, Colin Wilson. AN TV special. ABC. Fall

The Green Falcon. TV. Am.

The Green Hornet. Film. S: Chuck Pfarrer. U.

Incredible Hulk. Film. U.

❑ **Inspector Gadget.** LA film. S: J. Loeb III, M. Weisman. P: Ivan Reitman. U.

Judge Dredd. Film. Sylvester Stallone. S: Bill Wisher.

Kull. Film. U. S: C. Pogue.

Comical cartoon dinosaurs hit the Big Apple in November in Steven Spielberg's *We're Back*. Its eclectic voiceover cast includes Jay Leno, Walter Cronkite and Julia Child.

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The Lion King. AN film. WD. Nov. '94.

Lone Wolf & Cub. Film. D: John Bruno. S: Bill Wisher.

Mai the Psychic Girl. Film.

Mantis. Fox TV. U. EP: Sam Raimi, Sam Hamm. W/ Carl Lumbly. For mid-season.

❑ **The Mask.** Film. New Line. S/D: Chuck Russell. W/ Jim Carrey.

The Men in Black. Film. Col. P: W. Parkes, L. McDonald.

Mr. Magoo. Film. Am/WB.

❑ **Model by Day.** TV movie. Fox. W/ Famke Janssen, Shannon Tweed, Sean Young. S/P: J. Loeb III, M. Weisman. D: Christian Duguay. C: Kevin J. Taylor. Airs November.

Pagemaster. AN/LA film. Fox/HB. 1994 release.

❑ **Peanuts.** LA film. P/S: John Hughes. WB. (see item)

The Phantom. Film. PP.

Plastic Man. Film. WB/Am. S: L. Wilson. D: B. Spicer.

Pocahontas. AN film. WD.

Prince Valiant. AN series. Family Chan. LA film. S: M. Beckner. N. Constantin Film.

Red Sonja. TV. Lancit.

Reid Fleming. Film. WB.

❑ **Richie Rich.** Film. P: J. Silver, J. Davis. S: Jim Jennewein, Tom Parker. W/ Macaulay Culkin.

The Saint. Film. P: Robert Evans. S: Jeff Boam. PP.

Sandman. Film.

❑ **Sgt. Rock.** Film. P: Joel Silver. D: Renny Harlin. S: John Milius. WB.

The Shadow. Film. S: David Koepp. P: Martin Bregman. D: Russell Mulcahy. W/Alec Baldwin. Now shooting.

Sheena. TV series. P: Paul Aratow. Col.

Speed Racer. AN TV series. Fred Wolf Films. Fall '93 bow. Film. D: Patrick Read Johnson. S: J.F. Lawton. WB.

Spider-Man. AN TV mini-series. Fox. Daily TV series fall '94. Film. S: Jim Cameron (D), Neil Ruttenberg. Summer '95

Starwatcher. AN film. PP.

Superman. TV series. ABC. Debuts fall.

❑ **Tales from the Crypt.** New 13-show season begins airing September. HBO.

Tales from the Crypt-Keeper. AN TV series. Nel. ABC. Fall.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. AN series. CBS. Syn.

Terry & the Pirates. TV.

The Tick. AN TV mini-series. Fox. Sunbow.

❑ **Time Cop.** Film. D: Peter Hyams. S: Mark Verheiden. DH/L. W/ Jean-Claude Van Damme. Shoots September.

Trouble with Girls. Film. Fox. S: W. Jacobs, G. Jones.

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We're Back. AN film. Am/U. Fall '93.

Wolff & Byrd. TV. Lorimar. P: Joel Simon, Bill Todman Jr. EP/D: Joe Dante. Fox.

Wonder Woman. AN TV.

❑ **X-Men.** LA film. Fox.

Zen. Film. AN series.

❑ **Zorro.** Film. S: J. Randal Johnson, Joel Gross. D: Mikael Salomon. TriStar. LA TV series. F. Chan. AN TV series. Imagination F. Calico. Broadway musical.

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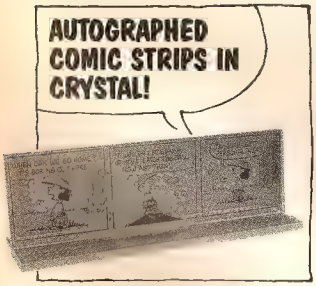

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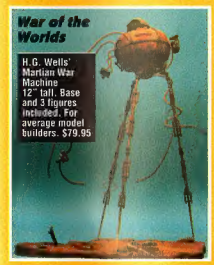

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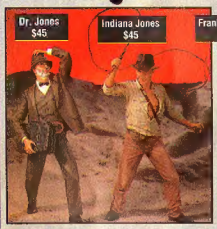

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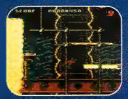

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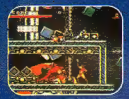

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